
PSYCHOLOGY OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY WIFE
ELMA RUTH COBB SHREVE
AND
THE CHILDREN
IRVIN COBB SHREVE
AND
AGNES ELLMORE SHREVE

PREFACE

This book has been written with the idea that psychology can be made of greater service to the English teacher. In recent years, psychology has made many valuable contributions to the fields of learning and understanding the child, but the schools have not been quickly responsive to these contributions. Practice is lagging far behind the new theories. The aim of this book is to make the important contributions of psychology in the field of English available to English teachers in usable form. No attempt has been made, however, to cover every detail of English teaching. On the other hand effort has been concentrated on a few of the fundamental types of English teaching: aims or objectives, the elimination of errors, composition, grammar, reading, and literature. Under each of these headings, the important research work has been reviewed and interpreted. Definite suggestions have been given to aid teachers in applying the findings of these research studies.

I am indebted to many authors for much of the material found in this volume. I have drawn freely from numerous research studies, and have quoted the opinions of leaders in the fields of English and education when more reliable data were not available. In every case, however, the source of this material has been indicated and due credit given to the author.

Special acknowledgement is due my colleague, Professor Hadden S. Rhodes of the English Department, who

read the manuscript, while in preparation, and offered many valuable suggestions.

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Psychology of the Teaching of English

CHAPTER I

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

To be effective learning activities must be controlled by definite aims or objectives. Teaching is now being defined as a process of directing the learning activities of the pupils. Obviously, without definite aims the learning processes cannot be guided efficiently. One can not select the best route to travel until he has determined his destination. Moreover, it is the near and the definite goals that provide a basis for skillful guidance. General objectives have but little guidance value in any specific learning situation. The first problem in the teaching of English is therefore the setting up of general and specific objectives for education and for the teaching of English.

First, what are the chief objectives of secondary education? Several years ago a committee appointed by the National Educational Association formulated seven objectives for the secondary school which have been widely accepted and frequently quoted by educational writers.¹

¹ *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*; Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1918, No. 35.

After reviewing the changes in the secondary-school population and considering the goal of education in a democracy, the committee states:

"This commission, therefore, regards the following as the main objectives of education: 1. Health. 2. Command of fundamental processes. 3. Worthy home-membership. 4. Vocation. 5. Citizenship. 6. Worthy Use of Leisure. 7. Ethical character."

The teaching of English should contribute to some extent to all these objectives, but to some more than others. Grammar and composition should contribute heavily to the command of the fundamental processes; reading and literature should make a valuable contribution to the worthy use of leisure and to the development of ethical character. Of course, English abilities contribute something to vocational efficiency, to worthy home membership, and to civic efficiency. However, most of these values will fail to materialize unless the English teacher plans her work with these objectives in view.

In more recent years there has been a shift of emphasis among educational philosophers from the subject to the child. For example, Dewey defines education as "the reconstruction of experience". Morgan states that, "The main object of education, then, is to fit an individual to become successful in his personal relations with his fellows."² From this viewpoint the aim of education is the development of a well-integrated, wholesome personality. Similarly, Jones and Hand assert: "The school at all levels is now accepting much more seriously its responsibility for helping students to develop and to maintain wholesome personalities."***** This is leading teachers

² Morgan, John, J B., *The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child*; page 7. MacMillan Company, New York, 1936.

to focus their attention primarily upon the needs and purposes of their students rather than upon subject matter." Again, these authors say: "The progress of students toward the progressive achievement of their purposes and life goals, with subject matter regarded as an important means to be employed when and as needed in the service of their all-round development, is now becoming a primary consideration. Objectives of teaching are now coming to be conceived primarily in terms of desired changes in behavior rather than in terms of a prescribed subject matter to be mastered."³

To the process of developing a wholesome personality English teaching should make an important contribution. The development of a wholesome personality is fundamentally a process of making successful adjustments, of meeting and resolving a series of mental conflicts. The English teacher should cultivate in her pupils the habit of turning to literature for inspiration and information that will enable them to make more successful adjustments to life situations.

The work in English should be planned with the idea of developing wholesome personalities, but this general objective cannot furnish effective guidance for the daily classroom activities. A well-integrated personality is dominated by a central purpose or goal, but this central goal is attained through the realization of contributory goals. Similarly, English teaching should contribute to the general aims of education through specific objectives definitely related to the chief end or aim of education.

³ Jones, Arthur J. and Hand, Harold C. *Guidance and Purposive Living*; Thirty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, Chapter I, 1938. Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois. Quoted by Permission of the Society.

What, then, should be the specific aims or objectives of the teaching of English?

For an answer to this question we turn to educational leaders and specialists in English. An examination of the material in this field reveals a great diversity of opinion with respect to the goals that should be set up for the guidance of the English teacher. Pendleton introduces his comprehensive study of the social objectives of school English with the statement:

"The school subject, English, is notoriously ill-defined. It is so broad that it includes, in actual practice, many exceedingly diverse educational aims and activities. It is so vague that hardly any two teachers conceive it alike, and the statements in curricula purporting to describe it are only rough and approximate. Nowhere is there to be found a really comprehensive, specific definition."

In this study of English objectives, Pendleton collected statements from English teachers, educators, and educational literature. His list contains 1581 specific objectives, which he grouped under a few general headings: (1) fundamental language facts; (2) conversation; (3) public speaking; (4) oral reading; (5) written composition; and (6) silent reading, including literature.⁴

Eighty judges ranked these 1581 items, in the order of their importance, employing six groups or ranks. Then a composite rating was made for each item. A few of the highest ranking items in each group are listed in the following outline.

I. Fundamental Language Habits

1. The ability to use intellectual economy in expres-

⁴ Pendleton, Charles S., *The Social Objectives of School English*; Nashville, Tenn., 1924.

sion—few words, not many; a thing said well once, not poorly; then supplemented by restatement.

2. An attitude of intelligent consciousness regarding one's use of language as a means of expression.

3. The habit of striving to excel one's own best records of attainment in various phases of mastery of vocabulary.

4. The habit of attentiveness and dynamic purpose to refer to a dictionary as soon as possible, whenever one meets in any language situation a word of which one lacks the mastery.

5. The ability to supply from the context the meaning of words with which one is familiar.

6. The ability to conceive of language as a living organism constantly changing, and, as a result, to greet changes in English with the proper attitude and degree of determination.

7. The ability to distinguish instantly and accurately between past participles and past tenses.

II. *Conversation*

1. The ability to speak in complete sentences, not in broken phrasing.

2. The ability to think quickly in an emergency.

3. The ability, in conversational situations, to speak the truth tactfully and efficiently.

4. An attitude of genuine desire to be constructive, not destructive in one's human relationships.

5. The attitude of maintaining the integrity of one's spoken word as one's bond—of keeping one's word.

6. The habit of listening attentively and thoughtfully when being addressed.

7. The ability to use only forms that are grammatically correct.

8. An attitude of genuine desire to accomplish through all one's abilities social service, not mere personal aggrandizement.

9. The ability to use fluently and accurately a wide, accurate, and expressive speaking vocabulary.

10. An attitude of avoidance of all affectation and lack of genuineness in manner of speaking.

11. An attitude of open-mindedness and the ability and willingness to change one's mind frankly.

12. The habit of keeping oneself accurately informed upon a considerable number of topics of wide interest and suitability for conversation.

III. *Public Speaking*

1. The ability automatically to speak grammatically correct English in one's public address.

2. The ability to think rapidly and accurately while speaking before an audience.

3. An attitude of avoidance of all affectation and lack of genuineness in manner of speaking.

4. The habit of accuracy in one's public statements.

5. The ability to maintain regarding all things an attitude of frank, open-mindedness and of willingness to learn.

6. The habit of attention to all physical matters of one's own person which can influence one's hearers.

IV. *Oral Reading*

1. The ability to read without mispronouncing words.

2. The ability to read without miscalling words.
3. The ability to read without hesitation or stumbling over pronunciations.
4. The ability to be guided effectively by the punctuation.
5. The ability to present thought effectively to an audience by oral reading.
6. The ability to enjoy stories of human experience read to one orally.

V. *Written Composition*

1. The ability to spell correctly without hesitation all the ordinary words of one's writing vocabulary.
2. The ability to write English which is grammatically correct.
3. The attitude of prompt, effective abolishment of any error in one's written English as soon as it is called to one's attention.
4. The ability to spell readily all the very common words of English written intercommunication.
5. The ability to capitalize speedily and accurately in one's writing.
6. Command over an adequate writing vocabulary.
7. The ability to punctuate accurately and speedily while writing.
8. The ability to spell without great concentration or attention—during one's straightforward writing, all the words of one's written vocabulary.
9. The ability to write a simple, straightforward business letter.
10. The attitude of expecting oneself, without hesitation or doubt, to write good English.

11. The ability to write one's thoughts fluently in acceptable sentences.

12. The ability to use a dictionary accurately and economically to help one's spelling.

13. The ability to begin a writing simply and directly with a significant first sentence.

VI. *Silent Reading Including Literature*

1. The habit of reading for enjoyment literature of the better sort.

2. The taste for reading books (not merely magazines) of an excellent sort.

3. An attitude of alert interest in the world and all things in it, and a desire to increase one's knowledge.

4. A perennial, never failing interest in people; the habit of studying them sympathetically.

5. The ability to refrain from marring or marking in any way a borrowed book.

6. Habitual realization that good physical and mental health is fundamental to really profitable reading.

7. A taste for reading the better class of magazines, not the inferior fiction sort.

8. The ability to rest oneself and divert one's mind from business and social perplexities through the enjoyable reading of literature.

9. The ability to determine quickly and accurately from a dictionary the pronunciation of a word.

10. An attitude of never injuring in any way library books which one is consulting.

11. A genuine, deep-seated interest in the world of books.

12. Habitual substitution, whenever possible, of an

hour's enjoyment of an ennobling book for an hour's intercourse with a degrading person.

13. Habitual facility in recognizing any familiar printed word.

• 14. The ability to find quickly the meaning of a word in the dictionary.

15. The ability to use literature as a window through which to look out upon human experiences as a life-long leisure occupation of maximum fruitfulness.

An examination of the rankings of these judges reveals a preoccupation with formal elements: spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and language forms. Grammatical correctness is rated above content; pronunciation, above the conveyance of thought. Refraining from marking books is rated above reading to enrich experience. Much of the material for this study was collected in the period 1918-1920. It will be interesting to note how the aims have changed as later studies are reviewed.

On the basis of extensive data collected from a wide range of courses in English literature, school surveys, reports of inspectors, college entrance examinations, and educational books, Crow set up the following aims for the teaching of literature in the secondary school:

"To interest and entertain the pupil in his English literature reading and study so that he will form the purpose and habit of reading books of a high type during his leisure time.

"To inspire the pupil with high ideals of character, loyalty, love, service, etc., which, as purposes and standards, ought to give needed direction and control to his life.

"To give the pupil an appreciation of a given master-

piece as a work of art through emphasizing elements of beauty in both thought and form of expression.

"To lead the pupil to recognize the permanent value of books, to make him feel that a given high class book, for instance, is desirable, is just the kind of book that he would like to own, to read again and again and have his friends read."⁵

In brief, this study finds that literature is taught for its ethical value and for its contribution to the worthy use of leisure. An effort is made to develop a liking for and an appreciation of the better books and magazines.

Searson made an investigation to determine what language abilities are needed and desired by men and women in different vocations. A total of 7,752 persons from 42 states were consulted. The following abilities had a frequency of mention of 50% or more.⁶

1. The ability to read and understand newspapers.
2. The ability to read and understand letters, orders, and contracts.
3. The ability to use good penmanship.
4. The ability to spell correctly.
5. The ability to read and follow definite directions.
6. The ability to converse well.
7. The ability to read and appreciate good books.
8. The ability to think clearly and cleverly.
9. The ability to read and understand magazines.
10. The ability to persuade effectively.

⁵ Crow, Charles Sumner, *Evaluation of English Literature in the High School*; Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 141, New York, 1924

⁶ Searson, J. W., *Determining A Language Program*; English Journal, 13-99-114, 1924.

The subjects of this study desire most of all to be able to read well, to write skillfully, to spell correctly, and to converse efficiently. In so far as this study is valid, it would follow that English teaching should concentrate on reading, penmanship, spelling, and conversation. These findings are in essential agreement with Pendleton's more extensive study. In this study, however, the objectives are more clearly defined.

Huddleson, in his study of 240 carefully selected high schools, found that English teachers generally accepted the aims of composition teaching set forth in the United States, Bureau of Education Bulletin, No. 2, 1917, and deliberately departed from these in only minor details.⁷ This bulletin states that the aim of high school composition is to give the pupil command of the art of communication in speech and writing. More specific aims are set up under each division of the general aim.⁸

I. *"Expression in speech includes:*

(a) Ability to answer clearly, briefly, and exactly a question on which one has the necessary information.

(b) Ability to collect and organize material for oral discourse on subjects of common interest.

(c) Ability to present with dignity and effectiveness to a class, club, or other group material already organized.

(d) Ability to join in an informal discussion, contributing one's share of information or opinion, without

⁷ Huddleson, Earle, *The Aims and Methods of Teaching Composition*; Twenty-Second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, 1927.

⁸ *Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools*; Bulletin, No. 27, 1917.

wandering from the point and without discourtesy to others.

(e) For those who have, or hope to develop, qualities of leadership, ability, after suitable preparation and practice, to address an audience or conduct a public meeting with proper dignity and formality, but without stiffness or embarrassment.

(f) Ability to read aloud in such a way as to convey to the hearers the writers thought and spirit and to interest them in the matter presented.

II. *"Expression in writing includes:*

(a) Ability to write a courteous letter according to the forms in general use and of the degree of formality or informality appropriate to the occasion.

(b) Ability to compose on the first draft a clear and readable paragraph, or series of paragraphs, on familiar subject matter, with due observance of unity and order and with some specific detail.

(c) Ability to analyze and present in outline form the gist of a lecture or piece of literature and to write an expansion of such an outline.

(d) Ability, with due time for study and preparation, to plan and work out a clear, well-ordered, and interesting report of some length upon one's special interests—literary, scientific, commercial, or what not.

(e) For those who have literary tastes or ambitions, ability to write a short story, or other bit of imaginative composition, with some vigor and personality of style and in proper form to be submitted for publication, and to arrange suitable stories in form for dramatic presentation."

This report of the Committee on the Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools is an important step away from the formal toward a more functional curriculum. However, the range of personal and social needs is not fully comprehended. Nevertheless, this committee laid the foundation on which others have built, resulting in considerable progress in the two decades that have followed.

Another important study of the objectives of English teaching is presented in the Fourth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence, Chapter IX. The material of this study pertains to language and composition.⁹ The committee lists the following situations in which spoken English is used:

1. *Conversation* at the table, in social gatherings, in discussion groups, in interviews, and in the use of the telephone.

2. *Meetings*

- (1) Informal, such as class and auditorium exercises.

- (2) Formal proceedings of organizations, clubs, and committees.

3. *Practical Discussions*

- (1) Speeches of felicitation, dedication, presentation of gifts, introduction of speakers, inauguration and retirement, and impromptu talks.

- (2) Reports of meetings, conferences, visits, illustrated lectures and demonstrations.

- (3) Persuasive talks as in membership drives, poli-

⁹ Fourth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence, Washington, D. C., 1926

tical campaigns, school campaigns for thrift, health, or cleanliness, and in applying for positions.

(4) Messages and announcements of games, lectures, exhibits, and meetings.

(5) Explanations and directions as to how to make a radio, a cake, or a flower box.

4. *Anecdotes and stories*

Telling anecdotes and stories to children, and to adults at social functions, on the train, at the dinner table, or at a public meeting.

The same study lists the following situations in which written English is used:

1. *Letters*, business and social, and informal notes, excuses, and invitations; also, formal notes.

2. *Notices* of games, lectures, exhibits, entertainments, and meetings.

3. *Reports* of committees.

4. *Note Taking* in preparation for papers, stories, discussions and reports.

5. *Filling out forms*, mail order blanks, applications for money orders, checks, deposit slips, test forms, telegrams, cablegrams, information blanks or questionnaires, and budgets.

6. *Making bibliographs*

7. *Creative writing* for papers, clubs, class, newspaper or magazine articles in school or local papers, stories, poems, or plays.

Johnson made an investigation to discover the activities in which people do or should engage that require the use of English composition.¹⁰ He had 104 college women

¹⁰ Johnson, Roy Ivan, *English Expression*; Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1926.

and their mothers make a careful list of the activities in which they needed to practice English composition. Each young woman compiled a list of activities from her own experiences and supplemented this list with a similar one from her mother's experiences. From these individual lists a composite list was made. Then the related activities were thrown together to form a final list with the items grouped around the major types of English expression or functional centers.

1. *Letters.* Around this center are grouped all forms of direct personal communication.

2. *Conversation.* This center includes all other activities in which conversation is the primary expressional element.

3. *Group discussions.* The expressional activities of committees, clubs, and other organized groups.

4. *Formal discussion.* The presentation of one's ideas to an audience. This type may be either oral or written.

5. *Reports.* These are largely reproductive in character, whereas formal discussion is creative expression.

6. *Personal memoranda.* This item includes diaries, notes on lectures, secretaries' memoranda.

7. *Special occasion talks.* This heading includes such items as toasts and introducing a speaker.

8. *Directions, instructions, and explanations.* This type of English expression is demanded in the conduct of business, in domestic management, and in social relationships.

9. *Story-telling.* This item includes the narrating of all kinds of incidents, such as stories, anecdotes, and jokes.

These nine functional centers include approximately 80% of the usages recorded in the individual lists. It will be observed that the findings of this study agree to a considerable extent with the views expressed by the rational committee in the Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools. This report includes five of the main headings of Johnson's study: letter writing, conversation, group discussions, reports, and formal discussion.

Carter V. Good examined several courses of study, secured from state departments of education and from the larger school systems, to determine the aims of English teaching as expressed in these manuals.¹¹ These aims are grouped under three main headings: composition, literature, and grammar. He found a large number and variety of aims stated in these manuals. Several of the highest ranking aims, in the order of frequency, are stated in the outline that follows.

I. *Composition (Twenty-seven aims are listed)*

1. Increased power of expression.
2. Developing the ability to think clearly and honestly.
3. Collecting and organizing material for a speech.
4. The general improvement of speech habits.
5. Giving training in artistic forms of expression.
6. Understanding and applying means of securing vividness.
7. Developing the ability to write a courteous letter according to the forms in general use.

¹¹ Good, Carter V., *English Objectives and Constants in Secondary Schools*; Peabody Journal of Education, 5:230-235. 1928.

II. *Literature (Thirty one aims are listed)*

1. To develop the ability to read with intelligence.
2. To improve the pupil's taste in reading.
3. To familiarize the pupil with a considerable body of the best literature as an expression of ideals and traditions.
4. To develop the ability to find pleasure in reading books by the better authors.
5. To arouse admiration for good language and effective expression.
6. To develop the power to understand, feel, and appreciate the emotions of others.
7. To develop the power of accurate and rapid silent reading.
8. To inculcate ideals.
9. To establish the habit of weighing passages of special significance.
10. To train for the wholesome enjoyment of leisure.

III. *Grammar*

To enable the pupil to correct his errors in oral and written speech.

The tendency to group aims around a few functional centers is not so marked in the findings of this study.

Starbird, Williams, and Hatfield made a study to discover the uses that pupils make of English out of school.¹² They prepared a questionnaire covering the uses that pupils are likely to employ, and asked them to check the uses which they had actually employed. Replies were

¹² Starbird, Myrtle, Williams, Ralph C., and Hatfield, W. Wilber, *Out-Of-School Uses of English*; *English Journal*, 22:466-471, 1933.

received from 346 pupils. The general items checked most frequently were speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Each of these main items were subdivided into more specific activities which the pupils checked.

I. *Speaking*

1. Informal handling of simple information.
2. Carrying on easy business.
3. Managing other people.
4. Participating in social intercourse.
5. Public speaking.

II. *Writing*

1. Social and business letters.
2. Formal invitations, acceptances, and regrets.
3. Filling in blanks, especially business blanks.
4. Memorandum of a telephone or other message for a third party.
5. Minutes of a meeting.
6. Announcements for newspapers or bulletin boards.
7. News items for publication.
8. A paper to be read or published.
9. Short story, play, or poetry for one's own pleasure or publication.

III. *Reading*

1. Recreational reading, pure play.
2. Leisure reading to satisfy curiosity.
3. Reference reading.
4. Reading to follow directions.

5. Reading to get information on which to base a judgment.

6. Reading billboards and display advertising in papers and magazines.

7. Reading to tell again to someone else.

8. Reading legal documents.

9. Oral reading.

IV. *Listening*

1. To casual conversation.

2. To telephone conversation.

3. To directions.

4. To the radio.

5. To a public address.

6. To private oral reading.

7. To sales talks at door or store.

The findings of this study confirm the view that conversation is the most frequent type of English expression and that written expression occurs less frequently. Reading comes next to conversation in frequency of use. Moreover, listening appears to be an important form of participation in English expression.

A more extensive study in this field was made by the Committee on the Place and Function of English in American Life.¹⁸ This study is summarized in the *English Journal*. The questionnaire method was employed. The findings are based upon 2,615 replies from several vocational groups: professions, business and industry, production, and unclassified. The data obtained indicate

¹⁸ *Report of the Committee on the Place and Function of English in American Life*; *English Journal*, 15 110-131, 1926.

that conversation, interviewing, listening, writing, and public speaking are the outstanding English activities in American life. Conversation appears to be most important single activity.

Elizabeth Baker made a similar study, obtaining her data from 8,671 pupils in five white schools of Dallas, Texas.¹⁴ The five items occurring most frequently were: (1) conversation, (2) business, (3) courtesy, (4) telephoning and (5) making talks. Again conversation assumes the place of first importance, constituting 45% of the oral use of language. There is almost a total absence of any literary use of language.

A more comprehensive study of the aims of English teaching was made by Dora V. Smith.¹⁵ The data upon which her findings are based were collected from 156 courses of study from 33 states, and from extensive classroom visitation in 15 states. With respect to the aims of teaching composition the author states that they vary all the way from teaching the pupil to copy dictation to inculcating in him a realization of the complexity of human nature and social life. The results of this study indicate that the specific aims of written composition in, the order of the frequency of mention, are the ability to:

1. Write with correctness and proper attention to mechanical form.
2. Write a simple, well-constructed paragraph.
3. Write well-unified, coherent sentences.
4. Write correct and effective letters.

¹⁴ Baker, Elizabeth W., *A Social Basis for Oral Composition*; English Journal, 19:208-213, 1930.

¹⁵ Smith, Dora V., *Instruction in English*; Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1932, No. 17; Washington, D. C.

5. Do specified types of theme writing.
6. Punctuate and capitalize correctly.
7. Express thoughts freely and effectively with some approach to style.
8. Do creative writing.
9. Outline material.
10. Apply the rhetorical principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis.
11. Organize material and develop a theme at some length.
12. Gather and evaluate materials from observation, experience, and reading.
13. Choose words effectively.
14. Write specified forms of discourse.
15. Think clearly and honestly, forming independent judgments.
16. Correlate grammar and composition to their mutual advantage.
17. Appreciate the value of success in composition writing.
18. Observe and interpret the life about one.

This list of objectives reveals a strong emphasis on the mechanics of expression and the traditional types of composition. There is, however, in some of the courses of study a noticeable trend towards organizing composition around functional centers. For example, one course of study organizes its expressional activities around seven functional centers: (1) conversation and discussion, (2) instructions, directions, and explanations, (3) announcements, reports, and speeches, (4) story-telling, (5) writing explanations, stories, and poems, (6) letter writing, (7) word study and spelling. But this course of

study is in the minority group. Many of the course of study still cling to the more traditional types of composition.

According to the findings of this study, the aims of oral composition, in the order of frequency, are :

1. To meet with intelligence and ease life situations demanding speech.
2. To develop the fundamentals of effective delivery.
3. To develop habits of correct usage.
4. To develop the ability to organize ideas.
5. To develop the ability to speak to an audience effectively.
6. To teach effective presentation of thought.
7. To develop poise in speaking before a group.
8. To teach proper enunciation and pronunciation.
9. To promote a wise selection of topics and materials for speaking.
10. To develop proper voice control and tone quality.
11. To develop ability in the oral interpretation of literature.
12. To habituate the use of clear effective sentences.
13. To inculcate the principles of vigorous, colorful expression.
14. To teach the principles of parliamentary form.
15. To develop character and personality through public and private intercourse.
16. To give practice in the cooperative presentation of plays.
17. To give practice in debating.
18. To broaden pupil's interests.
19. To develop skill in outlining.
20. To stimulate clear, orderly thinking.

Seventy two courses of study list specific aims for the teaching of grammar. The five items having the highest frequency are:

1. To fix definitely such principles of grammar as function in correct and adequate expression.
2. To develop the ability to use the sentence as a unit of expression.
3. To make correct usage habitual in speech and writing.
4. To stimulate the pupil to value good English and to take pride in improving his own speech and writing.
5. To lay the foundation for work in punctuation.

These aims indicate some tendency to abandon the traditional aims of formal grammar and to adopt the functional point of view. Frequently, the statement is made that the offerings include the amount of grammar that is functional in speech and writing.

The ten highest ranking aims for the teaching of reading and literature are:

1. To enrich the pupil's experience through reading.
2. To develop the standards of evaluation necessary to continue reading under one's own direction.
3. To develop a knowledge of the structure and technique of literary style.
4. To develop character and ideals.
5. To train the pupils to read good books with enjoyment.
6. To cultivate the esthetic nature of the pupil.
7. To develop good citizenship.

8. To develop a knowledge and appreciation of masterpieces.
9. To develop a knowledge of American literature.
10. To help the pupil to acquire a chronological revelation of his spiritual heritage.

Although some of these aims are modern, others reflect traditional ideas, such as reading for enjoyment and acquiring the racial heritage.

The first impression that one gets from an inspection of such a variety and profusion of aims for the teaching of English is likely to be one of confusion. There is a noticeable lack of agreement in the findings of the different studies when the number and variety of aims are considered. English teachers have not been able to agree upon a few general objectives. Nevertheless, progress is evident. A careful survey of these studies reveals certain trends over a period of years.—

First, There is a distinct trend away from formal and technical grammar towards a strong emphasis on functional grammar. Grammar is taught to improve usage.

Second, In composition, the trend is away from the traditional types—narration, description, argumentation, and exposition—towards organizing composition around functional centers, such as conversation, letter writing, preparing papers, taking notes, and outlining. An effort is being made to base composition on the out-of-school uses of English expression.

Third, In literature, the trend is away from the idea of transmitting to the pupil the literary heritage of the race towards the idea of using literature to enrich the life of the pupil. Literature is being taught for its adjustment value. The extensive reading of many books is replacing

the intensive study of a few classics. Again, there is a tendency to select literary materials on the basis of the pupil's needs rather than upon the basis of literary canons.

Fourth, There is a strong tendency to place more emphasis on teaching high school pupils to read. Standard tests in reading have revealed the disconcerting fact that many high school pupils are sadly lacking in reading ability. The idea is beginning to prevail that instruction in reading should not cease with the completion of the elementary course. Obviously, the beginning of new subjects of study creates new reading problems. Pupils need to learn to do several different types of reading in the high school.

What, then, should be the aims or objectives of English teaching? Perhaps, most of the authorities in this field would agree on the following general objectives:

1. The ability to use English effectively, both spoken and written, in all life situations requiring English expression.

2. The ability to do well several types of silent reading, and the habit of reading to enrich experience. Also, the ability to read well orally.

3. The ability to appreciate good literature and the habit of reading good literature to enrich experience.

Specific objectives will be suggested, in the following chapters, in connection with the discussion of the exercises necessary to attain these general objectives.

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CHAPTER II

THE ELIMINATION OF ERRORS

General Aim: Formal Correctness in the Use of English.

Specific Aim: The Elimination of Formal Errors.

In most cases the child is seriously handicapped in the use of English by the errors he has acquired in the pre-school years. Most children are born into an environment of erratic English. Such expressions as "he don't", "aint that nice", and "me and him" are heard on all sides. These expressions become the patterns for the child's language. Thus the common errors of home and community life are woven into his language. When he goes to school he must unlearn much that he has learned in the earlier years. But to unlearn is more difficult than to learn. *Habit substitution is more difficult than habit formation.* How to eliminate habits already firmly fixed in the child's language is, perhaps, the most difficult problem in the teaching of English. In fact, the problem is so difficult that the English teachers have failed, so far, to find any satisfactory solution. Investigations, as well as common observation, show that there is a strong tendency for errors to persist throughout the grades and high school, and even into the college period. Charters, after reviewing a number of studies in this field, states, "It is noteworthy that errors do not seem to vary in relative frequency throughout the grades".¹

¹ Charters, W. W., *Minimum Essentials in Elementary Language and Grammar*; Sixteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, 1931. Quoted by permission of the society.

Meeks conducted a study of oral errors in the schools of Boise.² The teachers in these schools made a list of the errors made in the schoolroom and on the playground by 3,500 pupils in grades one to eight. These errors were classified under six headings: (1) verbs, (2) double negatives, (3) pronunciation, (4) pronouns, (5) adverbs, and (6) colloquialisms or provincialisms. The errors were tabulated by grades to show the percentage of error in each grade. The results are shown in Table I.

There is no evidence in these data of any consistent decrease in errors from grade to grade. The total percentages show a remarkable persistency of errors from the first grade through the eighth. In colloquialisms, there is a noticeable increase from the first to the fourth, and again from the seventh to the eighth.

TABLE I

Errors by Grades (after Meek)

<i>Grades</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Verbs	49.5	48.1	32.8	34.0	40.9	48.7	37.0	36.6
Double N	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.7	3.3	3.2	2.9
Pronuncia	16.0	18.1	21.8	22.5	16.6	21.6	24.7	17.3
Pronouns	18.8	17.1	16.8	17.2	19.3	14.9	14.9	18.3
Adverbs	5.5	4.7	5.8	6.1	6.4	5.2	5.8	6.9
Colloq	8.2	9.0	14.9	14.8	12.9	11.5	12.3	18.3
Av Per	16.9	16.7	15.9	16.3	16.6	17.5	16.3	16.7

Similar results were obtained by Isabel Sears and Amelia Deibel in a study of the pupils in the schools of Cincinnati.³ For one week they collected and tabulated

² Meek, C. S., *English in the Elementary Schools*; Summarized in the Sixteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, p. 89-91, 1931. Quoted by permission of the society.

³ Sears, Isabel, and Diebel, Amelia, *A Study of the Common Mistakes in Pupils' Oral English*, Elementary School Journal, 17:44-54, 1916.

the oral errors of 1378 pupils in grades three to eight. The errors were classified under eight headings: verbs, pronouns, negatives, syntactical redundance, mispronunciation, prepositions, adjectives and adverbs, and ambiguous expressions. They found that all the six grades shared fairly equally in the errors in the eight classifications, except in mispronunciations. The school appears to be fairly effective in reducing the number of mispronunciations from grade to grade.

Ashbaugh made a study of the errors in letter writing of junior high and high school pupils.⁴ He checked the errors in 300 letters distributed equally among grades 7, 9, and 12. Errors in punctuation and capitalization were frequent in each grade. In punctuation the average percentage of errors by grades was: Grade VII, 47.8; Grade IX, 38.8; and Grade XII, 34.3. Capitals were omitted in 7.7% of the occasions in Grade VII, in 4.8% in Grade IX, and in 4.9% in Grade XII. Poor sentence structure was found in approximately 6% of all the sentences in each of the grades. The average percentage of error in all classifications was: Grade VII, 30.5; Grade IX, 24.8; and Grade XII, 22.5.

This study shows no marked decrease in errors from grade to grade. There is considerable decrease from grade seven to grade nine, but only a slight decrease from grade nine to grade twelve.

Johnson made an investigation to determine the persistence of technical errors in English composition through the four years of high school.⁵ He had 132 high school

⁴ Ashbaugh, E. J., *Non-School English of High School Students*; *Journal of Educational Research*, 15:307-313, 1927.

⁵ Johnson, Roy Ivan, *The Persistency of Errors in English Composition*, *School Review*, 25:555-580, 1917.

freshmen and 66 college freshmen, in Kansas City, write on suggested topics for fifteen minutes on three successive days. Then the papers were collected and the technical errors tabulated under fourteen headings.

The compositions written by the high school pupils contained 50,371 words; those written by the college students, 32,693 words. The errors numbered 2,160 and 787, respectively. In round numbers the errors per 1000 words are 42 for the high school freshmen and 23 for the college freshmen. These figures show a decrease in errors of approximately 50% from the first year of high school to the first year of college. However, when due allowance is made for elimination in high school this percentage shrinks to approximately 33.

Potter and Touton made a study in the schools of Los Angeles to determine the progress that was being made in the elimination of errors in composition in grades seven to twelve.⁶ They checked the papers of 2400 pupils and classified the errors under six headings: grammar, miscellaneous, punctuation, sentence structure, diction, and paragraph organization. The findings are based upon the ability of the pupils to detect and correct errors in composition papers. If the half grades are combined, there is a small but consistent increase in the ability to detect errors from grade to grade as follows: 18.5, 22.5, 32.0, 42.5, 48.5, and 53. These figures are in terms of the percentage of acceptable corrections from grade to grade. The authors conclude:

⁶ Potter, Walter H., and Touton, Frank C., *Achievement in the Elimination of Errors in the Mechanics of Written Expression Throughout the Junior-Senior High School*; Summarized by Lyman in *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language and Composition*, pages 99-100.

1. "Little progress in the elimination of language errors is made throughout the secondary school.
2. "Few language errors are largely eliminated by the secondary school.
3. "The greatest progress in the elimination of language errors is attained in grade IXA.
4. "The greatest number of acceptable corrections is shown in the grammar group of errors.
5. "The smallest number of acceptable corrections is shown in the paragraphing group of errors."

Pressey found only a slight decrease in errors in sentence structure from the seventh grade to the twelfth.⁷ His findings are based upon 980 compositions written by pupils in grades seven to twelve. The results are expressed in terms of the number of times each error occurred per 10,000 words. The decrease from grades seven and eight to grades eleven and twelve is only three errors per 10,000 words. Pressey concludes that there is very little decrease in the total number of errors from grade to grade. Errors in sentence structure are about as common in the last two years of high school as they are in the seventh and eighth grades.

Dorothy David reports a study made in the schools of Indianapolis in which the errors of 1899 pupils were observed for one week.⁸ These errors were tabulated to show the progress from grade to grade in error elimination. According to findings, errors increase from the second grade to the fifth, and then decrease slightly from

⁷ Pressey, S. L., *A Statistical Study of Children's Errors in Sentence Structure*; English Journal, 14:529-535, 1925.

⁸ David, Dorothy, *The Development of Language Habits*; Journal of Educational Method, 5:155-160, 1925.

the fifth to the eighth. However, the eighth grade made more errors than any other grade in the use of adjectives and adverbs, in the use of the preposition, and in the use of the double negative.

Stormzand and O'Shea classified the errors in 288 compositions ranging from the sixth grade to the college level.⁹ The results are summarized in Table II.

TABLE II

*Number of Errors per Sentence and the Ratio of Errors to the Number of Words per Sentence for Different School Levels.
(After Stormzand and O'Shea)*

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Errors per sentence</i>	<i>Ratio of Errors to words</i>
University upper class	.9	1:22.9
University freshmen	.9	1:20.3
High school seniors	1.1	1:20.7
High school juniors	1.2	1:14.8
High school sophomores	1.4	1:12.4
High school freshmen	1.4	1:12.2
Eighth grade	1.2	1:12.4
Seventh grade	1.1	1:12.4
Sixth grade	1.1	1:11.5

These data reveal a strong tendency for errors to persist through high school and college. In errors per sentence, there is some gain in the last two years of high school, but none in the college period. High school freshmen and sophomores make more errors per sentence than the upper grade pupils. On the basis of the ratio of errors to words, there is a slight gain from the sixth grade to the last year of high school, and a larger gain from high school to college. College students write longer sentences and make slightly fewer errors per sentence.

⁹ Stormzand, M. J., and O'Shea, M. V., *How Much English Grammar?*; p 179, Warwick and York, Inc., Baltimore, Md, 1924

On the whole this study does not show any marked decrease in errors from the sixth grade through college.

Symonds and Hinton found some decrease in errors in sentence structure from the fourth grade to the twelfth. The greatest improvement was in grades four to seven.¹⁰ Their data were derived from an analysis of 724 compositions distributed through the upper grades and high school. The total number of errors per 10,000 words were distributed through the grades as shown in Table III.

TABLE III

The Errors in Grammar in Each School Grade

Grades	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Total Errors	248	203	134	94	74	57	52	26	20

Ellen Frogner made an analysis of 2821 compositions written by pupils in three junior high schools and three senior high schools in Minneapolis.¹¹ Each pupil wrote three compositions: a narrative, a social news letter, and an exposition. The pupils were distributed in grades seven, nine, and eleven. The results are stated in terms of error quotients. There is some progress from the seventh grade to the eleventh, a decrease from 0.108 to 0.049. There is more progress between grades nine and eleven than between grades seven and nine. It was found that errors in sentence structure decrease as the intelligence level within each grade advances.

The data presented in the preceding pages are con-

¹⁰ Symonds, P. S., and Hinton, E. M., *Studies in the Learning of English Expression: Grammar*, Teachers College Record, 33:340-438, 1932.

¹¹ Frogner, Ellen, *Problems of Sentence Structure in Pupil's Themes*; English Journal, 22:742-745, 1933.

flicting, to some extent; but, in general, they indicate that the school is only partially succeeding with the problem of the elimination of errors. Some of the studies show little or no decrease in errors from grade to grade; others show a considerable decrease, but nothing even approaching complete success. In fact, one gets the impression of failure rather than success from reading the investigations in this field. It should be noted, however, that the more recent studies show more progress from grade to grade than the earlier studies. This fact supports the belief and hope that the schools are becoming more proficient in dealing with this difficult problem. However, the experiments in this field show that errors have a strong tendency to persist throughout the grades and high school. Surely, there is need for a more effective attack on this problem.

Why are teachers failing in large measure in their efforts to eliminate errors? There are two main reasons: (1) language habits, as are all habits, are by their very nature strongly persistent; and (2) the attack upon this problem has been in most cases unpsychological. The process of habit substitution is always difficult requiring persistent effort over a considerable period of time. On the other hand, the procedure has been haphazard and very unevenly distributed so far as any one habit is concerned. Teachers have attempted to correct all mistakes as they occur instead of concentrating on a few. There is little likelihood that language habits will be corrected unless the psychology of habit substitution is rigidly applied. What, then, are the processes involved in habit substitution?

1. There must be a desire to form the new habit.

2. The old habit must be blocked out consciously; that is, not permitted to function at all.

3. The new habit must be used on all appropriate occasions until it becomes well established by frequent use.

The practice of correcting all the mistakes of the pupil whenever made is therefore unpsychological and largely futile. It is impossible for a pupil to block out all his errors at one time. He cannot even think of all of them at one time. To have even a fair chance of success, he must concentrate on a few errors. For the time being, other errors may well be ignored. It makes but little practical difference whether an error has been made 10,000 times or 10,100 times. After a habit is well fixed a few more repetitions can make no significant difference in its persistency. Furthermore, the constant correction of a pupil's mistakes tends to make him self-conscious and interferes with his freedom and fluency of expression.

How, then, should the teacher proceed in dealing with this problem of the elimination of language errors? The brief answer is, she should proceed psychologically. She should apply the principles of habit substitution. Psychologists agree that habits cannot be broken, that is entirely eliminated. The best that the possessor of an undesirable habit can hope for is the blocking out of the old habit and the substitution of a more desirable form of response. Traces of the old habit will remain and there is always danger of a return to the old reaction. The teacher should understand clearly that correcting language errors is a process of habit substitution, and is a major psychological operation. Habit substitution is a complex process in which several factors must be con-

trolled. The pupil should have a clear insight into the nature of the new habit and a strong desire to acquire the new mode of response. The new response must be practiced for a considerable period of time with no exceptions occurring. The teacher must have a plan of procedure that will provide for all these factors. The following plan is not to be followed blindly, it is merely suggestive. If the teacher can improve on this plan, she should by all means employ the better plan.

1. *Stimulate the will to learn.* The first factor in correcting language errors is a strong desire on the part of the pupil to be free from the old habit and to acquire the new response. New language forms will not prevail over the old because the teacher desires the pupil to change. The pupil must have a real desire to improve his language. The pupil will not guard against the use of the incorrect forms outside of school unless he appreciates the value of good language. Without the control of this factor there is no hope of success. The use of "they were" in school and "they was" outside school will never result in the substitution of "they were" for "they was". Success depends upon the pupil's using "they were" on all occasions until the desired form becomes well established as a language habit.

How can the desire to speak and write well be stimulated? Perhaps, the best source of motivation is an appreciation of the value of good English. The ability to speak and write effectively is an advantage to anyone in any vocation and in social intercourse. Lead the pupil to consider carefully these advantages and to see how poor English is a handicap to the lawyer, doctor, teacher, or business man. On the other hand, correct and forceful

English makes a good impression on one's associates and wins the admiration of strangers. Good English opens the doors of opportunity, whereas poor English tends to drive away opportunity itself. Illustrate these points with several concrete cases. Try to develop in the pupil's mind the generalization that the ability to use one's native tongue effectively is a valuable asset well worth a strenuous effort to attain. In this connection the teacher's example should be an inspiration to the pupil.

Again, the desire to eliminate errors may be stimulated by group and self competition. Check each drill exercise and give the pupil a definite score. Have each pupil construct a graph showing his standing and progress in the drill exercises. Encourage him to try to improve his own score and to excel others. Give frequent tests and exhibit the results in the form of a graph.

Utilize the desire to write for the school paper and to appear on special programs to stimulate an interest in correct usage. The pupil most proficient in English, other factors being equal, has the best chance of being chosen to represent his school on special occasions, as in speech contests or community programs. Also, the observance of special days and occasions, as National Speech Week, may be made to contribute to interest in effective expression.

2. *Make an analysis of the pupil's errors.* The next step is to discover what errors the pupils make in their oral and written expression. Several studies of common errors have been made and reported. Johnson tabulated the technical errors in 60,371 words of composition written by 132 first year high school students in Kansas

City, Missouri.¹² Lyman made a similar study of the language errors of 322 first year pupils in three high schools in Illinois and one in Iowa.¹³ Stormzand tabulated the errors in 18,223 words of composition written by pupils in Freeport High School, Illinois.¹⁴ Armstrong listed the errors in the written composition of 238 first year pupils in the Northeast High School, Kansas City, Missouri.¹⁵ These studies all employed the same categories in classifying their errors. The outline they used is given below to aid teachers in making a similar analysis of the errors of their own pupils and to present in a general way the findings of these important studies.

I. *Mistakes in the case of pronouns*

1. Subject or object of the verb in the wrong case. She saw my brother and I.

2. Predicative nominative in the wrong case. I do not know whom he is.

3. Object of preposition in the wrong case. They called to my friend and I.

4. Use of the objective for the possessive with gerund. It was all the result of that cat crossing my path.

II. *Other misuses of pronouns*

5. Disagreement of pronoun and antecedent. A person can find what they look for.

¹² Johnson, Roy Ivan, *The Persistency of Error in English Composition*; School Review, 25:555-580, 1917.

¹³ Lyman, R. L., *Fluency, Accuracy, and General Excellence in English Composition*, School Rev, 26 85-100, 1918.

¹⁴ Stormzand, M. J., and O'Shea, M. V., *How Much English Grammar?*, p. 166f, Warwick and York, Inc, Baltimore, Md, 1924

¹⁵ Armstrong, W. B., *A Study in the Relative Frequency and Persistency of Technical Errors in Written Composition*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Education, University of Kansas, 1925.

6. "You" used indefinitely. When you start to high school you feel important.

7. Miscellaneous misuses of the pronoun. A lady which etc.

III. *Mistakes in the use of verbs*

8. Disagreement of verb and subject. On the bank was some water lilies.

9. Change of tense in main clause.

10. Wrong past tense or past participle. We had drank.

11. Wrong verbs used. I will lay down.

12. Mistakes in mood. He acted as though he was the king's son.

IV. *Mistakes in the uses of adjectives and adverbs*

13. Use of adjective for adverb. He spoke respectful.

14. Use of "most" for "almost". I go most every time.

15. "Only" misplaced in the sentence. I only had one lesson to study.

16. The use of a double negative. There wasn't hardly room for me.

17. Miscellaneous misuses of adjectives and adverbs. It was a very healthy food.

V. *Mistakes in the use of prepositions and conjunctions*

18. Use of wrong or superfluous preposition. He got off of the car.

19. Use of wrong conjunction. The reason was because etc.

20. Misuse of "like" It looks like he wasn't coming.

VI. *Ungrammatical sentence structure*

21. Incomplete sentence.
22. Failure to make new sentence for new thought.
23. Miscellaneous mistakes in sentence structure.

VII. *Failure to express clear meaning*

24. Ambiguity due to indefinite pronominal reference.
He had to eat olives with the Smith girls although he did not like them.

25. Awkward, "wordy", or complicated phrasing.

26. Other cases of failure to express clear meaning:
Her mother cooked a dozen eggs and twice as much bacon.

VIII. *Mistakes in punctuation*

27. No period.
28. Members of series not separated.
29. Independent clauses of compound sentences not separated.
30. No punctuation after introductory expression.
Well how are you?
31. Name of city and state written without punctuation. Kansas City Missouri.
32. Miscellaneous mistakes in punctuation.

IX. *Mistakes in the use of the apostrophe*

33. Failure to distinguish between "it's" (it is) and "its" (possessive). The bird will not do it's best singing if its a cloudy day.

34. Wrong forms of possessive nouns. There was a sale of ladie's dresses.

35. "O'clock" written without an apostrophe.

36. Miscellaneous misuses of the apostrophe. I dont know.

X. Mistakes in capitalization

37. Failure to use capital letter.

38. Improper use of capital letter.

XI. Careless omission or repetition

39. Omission of word or phrase.

40. Omission of letter or syllable.

41. Repetition of syllables words or phrases.

XII. Mistakes in spelling

42. Compound words incorrectly written.

43. Misspelling of "to", "two", and "too".

44. Misspelling of "their" and "there".

45. Other misspelled words.

XIII. Misuse of quotation marks

XIV. Miscellaneous errors

In Stormzand's and Armstrong's studies the errors were distributed among the fourteen categories as shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

*Rank Distribution of Technical Errors in Written Composition.
(After Stormzand and Armstrong)*

<i>Error Group</i>	<i>Stormzand Grades IX-XII</i>	<i>Armstrong Grades IX and XI</i>
I	14	14
II	11	12
III	6	4
IV	12.5	10
V	10	11
VI	7	2
VII	3	8
VIII	1	3
IX	8	9
X	4	6
XI	5	5
XII	2	1
XIII	13	13
XIV	9	7

The close agreement of these two studies is noteworthy. Errors in punctuation ranked first in Stormzand's study and third in Armstrong's. This same group of errors ranked first in Lyman's study and second in Johnson's. Approximately, 44% of all the errors in Stormzand's study, 33% in Lyman's study, and 10% in Johnson's study were errors in punctuation. Mistakes in spelling ranked first in Johnson's study, and second in Lyman's and Stormzand's studies. Other types of errors ranking high in all the studies were careless repetitions or omissions, mistakes in capitalization, and ambiguity or indefinite meanings.

English teachers may well make a similar study of the errors made by their own pupils in both oral and written expression. When these errors have been classified, they should be made the basis of the curriculum in error elimination. If punctuation is the most frequent source of error in the local high school, as it is in these studies,

obviously, the local high school should plan a systematic study of the rules of punctuation and provide an abundance of practice in applying these rules. All errors should receive some attention, but effort should be expended largely where the need is greatest.

3. *Allocate these errors to the appropriate semesters.* To attempt to correct all of a pupil's errors at one time is a psychological blunder. More will be accomplished by eliminating 10 errors than by trying to eliminate 100 errors. Consequently, it is wiser to assign a few errors to each semester and make a concentrated drive for their elimination. Sixteen periods or terms may be provided for this work by dividing each semester into two terms. In the previous classification of errors there are fourteen main groups. This is less than one group per term. Concentrate on one group of errors each term. Designate the errors of this group as the errors marked for elimination. Correct these marked errors whenever they occur either in oral or written expression. Make an effort to secure the cooperation of the teachers in other departments. This cooperation will be much easier to secure, if the teacher is given a definite list of errors to be corrected. Of course, some of the error groups require much more attention than others. Time and effort should be distributed among the various groups according to the frequency of the errors and the difficulty of learning the correct forms. Obviously, mistakes in the use of verbs would require more time and effort than misuse of the quotation marks, particularly, when considered from the standpoint of the difficulty of learning. Moreover, errors in the use of the verb occur in both oral and written

expression, whereas errors in the use of quotation marks occur only in written discourse.

Finally, the English teacher should not permit herself to worry over the errors that are not marked for elimination in the present term. By the time the pupil reaches high school his errors are already firmly fixed as language habits. So a few more repetitions will do no more harm. The effect of repetition has already reached its maximum. Moreover, these errors will receive due attention at the proper time. To succeed in the present is all that is necessary to the ultimate success of the plan.

4. *Teach the correct forms.* Teach the principles of language and grammar that will enable the pupil to understand why one form is correct and another wrong. Teach functional grammar rather than technical grammar. A knowledge of grammar will not correct errors automatically, but it will enable the pupil to become his own language censor. Success in error elimination demands that the pupil use the correct forms outside of school as well as in school. Consequently, he must know what forms are correct. Otherwise he may appear as ridiculous as the old lady who is reported as saying, "I never made but one mistake in grammar in my life and I seen it as soon as I done it." It is well known that grammar does not function automatically, but it can be applied consciously to good advantage. In other words, grammar does not carry over to English expression, but it can be carried over.

5. *Drill the pupils on the correct forms.* Provide an abundance of practice in using the correct forms for several days in succession. These drill exercises should

be carefully prepared, or selected, and should provide well distributed drill on all the correct forms to be substituted for the errors marked for elimination. There should be many correct repetitions of the correct forms without monotony. To this end a variety of exercises should be provided, such as completion exercises, checking or selecting correct forms, and writing sentences containing the forms to be learned. The pupil should be given a definite score on each exercise and by this means kept informed of his failures and successes.

If the teacher has the skill necessary and the time available, she should prepare her own drill exercises. Otherwise, it is better to use prepared material, for this type of material, if carefully selected, is superior to poorly prepared improvised material. Below is a sample of the prepared material that is available.

Recognizing Sentences

(Introduction Omitted)

I. When you have read the above carefully, you should be able to tell whether the following group of words are sentences or not. Read each group of words. If the group is a sentence, write S on the line at the left of the sentence and place a period at the end. If the group is not a sentence, write NS on the line at the left.¹⁶

1. Men wrote their records on papyrus
2. Papyrus is like paper
3. From the pith of a reed

¹⁶ Reproduced from Ahles, Inez, and Lawlor, Mary, *Steps to Good English*; Iriquois Publishing Company, New York, 1935

4. Papyrus is made from the pith of a reed
5. The reed grows along the banks of the Nile
6. Used the skin of a lamb
7. Wood-block printing
8. We learned modern printing
9. Honor of inventing printing
10. Beloved by his friends and neighbors
11. He made toys for the children
12. The invention of printing was an accident
13. Gutenberg invented the first printing press
14. Boys dashing in and out of doors
15. The telephone rang

II. On separate paper make sentences to include the groups in Exercise I that are not sentences.

III. In the following paragraph there are nine sentences. Can you find them? Show that you know what a sentence is by writing the paragraph correctly on a separate sheet. Begin each sentence with a capital and end each with a period.

Near the home of the cousin were some large stables these stables were very dirty as thousands of cattle had lived in them for years Heracles was told to clean them one man could not do this alone a dozen could not do it Heracles thought it over at last he dug two great ditches which turned the waters of the rivers into the stables the waters washed away the dirt in one day the stables were cleaned.

IV. In the space below, write short sentences telling

about some of your interesting school activities. Read your sentences and explain why each is a sentence.

There is an abundance of similar materials in the form of workbooks and drill exercises. If the teacher has at hand a good supply of these, she may be able to select from them most of the exercises that she will need. This would be a great time saver for the teacher, for good drill exercises cannot be hastily prepared. They cannot be thrown together between the four o'clock tea and the evening show. It is incumbent on the teacher, however, to select, improvise, and arrange material that will provide well distributed drill on the correct form for each error marked for elimination at that particular time. The fact that only a few errors are in the process of elimination at any one time greatly facilitates the preparation of suitable drill exercises.

6. *Correct all the marked errors whenever they occur.* Insist on the pupil's using the correct forms on all occasions. The success of the whole plan depends on his permitting no exceptions to occur. Secure the cooperation of teachers in other departments in checking and correcting these marked errors. Encourage the pupil to cooperate by guarding against these errors outside of school as carefully as they do in school.

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CHAPTER III

COMPOSITION

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

What psychological principles should be applied in teaching composition? Apparently, many high school teachers depend too much upon the Law of Exercise as stated by Thorndike several years ago. Huddleson found that high schools require, on the average, one or two themes a week throughout the high school course.¹ Approximately, 150 themes are written with a minimum of guidance and constructive criticism. With this system only meager results are obtained. Many of the pupils fail to achieve even a formal excellence in English expression. Moreover, the recent studies in the psychology of learning do not justify this extreme dependence upon repetition or practice as the main factor in composition. The critics of the Law of Exercise maintain that exercise is effective only under certain conditions. For example, Mursell states, "The value of repetition or use lies in the fact that it gives the true causes of learning a chance to operate."² So practice in composition will not be effective unless the factors that make for rapid learning

¹ Huddleson, Earle, *The Aims and Methods of Teaching Composition*; Twenty-second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, 1923

² Mursell, J. L., *Psychology of Secondary School Teaching*, p. 62. W. W. Norton Company, New York, 1932.

are operating. Too often the teacher of composition fails to provide for these factors and, as a result, the pupil profits very little from writing a theme. Furthermore, Thorndike has modified his views to a considerable extent with respect to the efficiency of practice. In a more recent publication he asserts:

"So far as I can now see, the repetition of a situation in and of itself has no selective power. If a certain set of affairs acts upon a man 10,000 times, he will so far as any intrinsic action of the 10,000 repetitions is concerned, respond in the same way to the last thousand as the first. The repetition of a situation may change a man as little as the repetition of a message over a wire changes the wire."³

This excerpt from Thorndike applies particularly to mechanical learning, but it expresses fairly well the present status of the Law of Exercise. Learning of composition is essentially a process of acquiring new forms of reaction. Exercise tends to fix reactions on their present level. One cannot learn to write well, therefore, by doing much inferior writing. Having no selective power, practice cannot in and of itself bring about improvement.

Moreover, the "beta hypothesis" of learning, if valid, indicates that factors other than exercise account for learning. This hypothesis holds that practicing an error leads to its elimination. Dunlap found that practising writing "hte" led to the elimination of this error.⁴ Holsopple and Vanouse conducted an experiment to determine the

³ Thorndike, E. L., *Human Learning*, p. 14, The Century Company, New York, 1931.

⁴ Dunlap, Knight, *Habits: Their Making and Unmaking*; New York, Liveright, Inc., 1932.

effect of practising errors in spelling.⁵ They used as subjects eleven students beginning typewriting. They tabulated the errors made by these students in spelling. Then practice was given on half of these errors by writing the correct forms and on the other half by writing the incorrect forms. The practice of the incorrect forms proved to be more effective in correcting errors. "All except one of the eleven students made errors in words which were practiced as correctly spelled, and not a single one of the eleven students made an error in any word which was practiced incorrectly spelled."

Helen Peak and Louise Deese had 40 pupils learn nonsense syllables by the anticipation method.⁶ The experimenter pronounced a syllable, then another syllable appeared on the rotating drum which the subject pronounced. After the pairs were learned, half of the pairs were subjected to 50 repetitions without the presentation of the paired associates. The syllables given this extinction procedure showed a greater number of syllables forgotten than did the control syllables.

It would be unsafe to infer from the limited amount of data at hand that practicing wrong forms is more effective than practicing correct forms. We may well doubt whether going dirty will establish habits of cleanliness, whether practicing dishonesty will lead to honesty. It is pertinent to observe, however, that learning appears to depend to a considerable extent upon factors other than practice or exercise.

Furthermore, the "Gestalt" psychologists challenge the

⁵ Holsopple, J. Q., and Vanouse, L. A., *A Note on the Beta Hypothesis of Learning*, School and Society, 29:15-16, 1929.

⁶ Peak, Helen, and Deese, Louise, *Experimental Extinction of Verbal Material*; Journal of Experimental Psychology, 20:244-261, 1937.

validity of the theory that learning is a process of the gradual elimination of errors and the stamping in of the right responses by repetition. They maintain that learning is essentially perceptual and is characterized by sudden insights rather than the gradual elimination of errors by practice. From this point of view learning is primarily acquiring new insights. The learner may perceive suddenly the key to the solution of a problem. Thorndike has recognized the importance of this factor in his statement that learning is facilitated by the identification of the bonds to be formed. He states that grammar is an easy subject to teach because the bonds to be formed are readily identifiable, whereas composition is difficult to teach because the bonds to be formed are difficult to identify. However, no claim is made here that all learning is explained by this concept of insight. It may well be that trial and error plays an important part in motor learning, whereas insight is the main factor in ideational learning. If so, insight is the main factor in the learning of composition. One improves his ability in letter writing not by writing many letters, but by gaining insight into the factors that constitute a good letter. The same may be said of any other form of composition. Certainly, improvement in composition is due far more to other factors than it is to the Law of Exercise. Outstanding among these factors are:

1. *The will to learn.* The desire to be able to speak and write correctly and effectively is fundamentally important.
2. *Insight.* To learn readily the learner must identify the bonds to be formed, that is, he must see clearly just what is to be learned.

3. *Properly distributed practice.*

4. *Practice guided by specific aims.* The learner should practice to improve at specific points rather than for general improvement. The practice should be applied to the point of error.

5. *Definite standards of attainment.* Definite goals adopted by the learner stimulate to greater activity.

6. *Frequent checking of results.* The results should be checked frequently and the pupil kept informed of his progress.

When these factors are operating at full strength, practice will be effective according to the pupil's measure of ability. The problem of teaching composition is largely how to provide for these factors that affect the learning process.

1. *The will to learn.* How can the will to learn be stimulated? What can the teacher do to develop the desire on the part of the pupil to speak and write with force and elegance? The best intrinsic motive is a feeling of value. Lead the pupil to a realization of the values of good English expression and he will desire these values. Have the pupils make a study of the values of good English, and then consider his own attainments in the light of these values. Is he satisfied with his present attainments? Does he really need to improve? What benefits would he derive from improving the quality of his English? After all, is the ability to use good English a goal worth striving to attain? On the other hand, what price does the pupil pay for his failure to acquire a high level of skill in his own English expression? The advantages and the disadvantages should be illustrated

with several actual cases. Other motivating factors that may be utilized are:

- a. Rivalry, particularly group rivalry and self-competition.
- b. The frequent checking of the pupil's progress.
- c. The setting up of definite goals to be attained.
- d. The desire for recognition and approval. This factor may be utilized by providing an opportunity to write for the school paper, or to speak on special occasions.
- e. The teacher's own personality. *An inspiring teacher is after all the best source of motivation.*

2. *Insight.* How can the pupil be led to see clearly just what he needs to learn? The first step is to subdivide the general field of composition into functional types, such as conversation, letter writing, papers, discussions, outlines, and summaries. The composition exercises should be organized around these functional centers. Then each type of exercise should be analyzed to determine the main characteristics. A good method of procedure is to read and analyze models. One can learn more about letter writing by reading and analyzing a few good models than he can by writing a number of poor letters. The outcome of this reading and analysis should be an insight into what constitutes a good letter. Also, diagnostic scales can be used to good advantage. Utilize the analyses that have been made and reported in educational literature. Several attempts have been made to analyze the different functional types of English Expression, and to set definite objectives to be attained in the study of these types. A good example of this type of study is Johnson's monograph on English Expression in which he analyzes letter writing and lists the qualities of a good

letter.⁷ This point will be elaborated further in connection with a discussion of each type of language activity.

3. *Properly distributed Practice.* Practice should be distributed over all the essential points according to the needs of the pupils and the difficulty of mastery. Practice may well be concentrated on one point, but all points should receive due attention in turn. For example, in conversation, practice may well be concentrated for the time being on learning to discuss without arguing, but all the other factors of conversation should be subjected in turn to a period of concentrated effort. Improvement can not be made on a dozen points at one time; so all points should receive practice in turn. Of course, the more difficult points should receive more emphasis than the easier points. Again, practice should be distributed according to the needs of the individual pupil. A given pupil may need much more practice on point B than on point A.

Another type of distribution has to do with the length of periods and intervals. We do not know the best distribution of practice for all types of learning and for pupils of different ages; but we do know that practice should be regular and systematic, and continued long enough to produce fruitful results. Usually, short periods with daily intervals produce better results than longer periods coming less frequently.

4. *Practice guided by specific aims.* The teacher should continually remind herself that practice in and of itself does not bring about improvement. Some men preach

⁷ Johnson, Roy Ivan, *English Expression*, Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1926.

for a life time and never rise above mediocrity. Some teachers teach for forty years and are so behind the times that they are forced into retirement. The preacher never learns the art of effective exegesis. The teacher never acquires an effective method of teaching. Some people talk almost incessantly for several decades without learning to avoid the common errors, such as "he don't" or "they was." Verily, practice to be effective must be controlled by some definite goal and undertaken for the purpose of improving at some specific point, as to improve sentence structure, to master the use of the comma, or to eliminate errors in the use of verb forms.

5. *Definite standards of attainment.* Leading the pupil to set for himself definite standards of attainment stimulates him to greater activity. These standards may be derived from standard scales and from activity analyses. However, these standards will not be effective unless the pupil adopts them as *his goals*. Standards set for the pupil by the teacher may be entirely ineffective. The setting up of standards should be a cooperative process in which the pupil plays the leading role.

6. *Frequent checking of results.* The results of the pupil's efforts should be checked frequently, and the pupil should be kept informed of the progress he is making towards his adopted goals. Compositions may be graded on a score card prepared by the teacher, or by the use of a standard scale. The pupil's efforts should be evaluated in the light of the standards that have been set up. The scoring should be diagnostic indicating to the pupil wherein he has succeeded and wherein he has failed.

A more detailed discussion of how to provide for each

of these factors that affect the progress of learning will be given in connection with a discussion of a few of the types of English expression.

CONVERSATION

The studies reviewed in Chapter I indicate that conversation is the most frequent form of language activity. All normal individuals spend many hours conversing with their friends and associates in their work. This type of language activity is, therefore, one of the most important to be taught in the schools. English, as well as other subjects should be taught not for school but for life. If practice could make perfect, it should not be necessary to teach conversation in the schools, for life situations provide an abundance of practice in conversing. But, as we have seen in an earlier section, unguided practice merely serves to fix errors not to eliminate them. Therefore, conversation should be taught in the schools. But how can the pupil be taught to converse well?

First of all, the pupil must be led *to desire to be a good conversationalist*. To this end emphasize the value of being a good conversationalist. Conversation has contributed largely to the sum of human knowledge. In ancient times great teachers like Socrates taught their disciples through the medium of conversation. In these modern days conversation is an important means of disseminating information on health, cookery, agriculture, and other phases of practical life. In conversation housewives exchange ideas on cooking and cleaning; farmers discuss the problems of agriculture. Likewise, business men discuss the outlook for trade and commerce. By this means news is disseminated. Formerly, houses were built

close to the roadside so that news might be gathered from the wayfarers. In colonial days, southern planters stationed watchers by the roadside to hail travelers and invite them to tarry a while and relate the news of distant places. Moreover, conversation has always been an important medium for the exchange of ideas on questions of great moment. Frequently, great statesmen gather at the brilliant capitols of the world to discuss grave problems pertaining to war or peace. Finally, conversation has long been, and still is, one of the finest forms of entertainment. "Amos an' Andy," "Lum and Abner," and other great radio teams, entertain thousands with their delightful conversations. "Friendly colloquium has always been one of the richest enjoyments of human companionship." What more delightful way to spend an evening than in conversation with a friend! A good conversationalist may well find more pleasure in conversing with friends than he does at the card table.

Although it must be admitted that much conversation is trivial, or mere gossip, some of it is tremendously important to the participants. By this means others may be led to change their point of view, to consummate important business deals, even to become a husband or wife. Again, to be a good conversationalist makes one more acceptable socially.

Since conversation has so many values and plays such an important part in the affairs of the world and in one's daily life, who would not earnestly desire to become a good conversationalist?

A second important factor is *insight into what constitutes good conversation*. How can this insight be acquired? How can the learner discover the characteristics of good conversation? How can the pupil be led to evalu-

ate properly his present attainments? How can a poor conversationalist become a good conversationalist? The ability to converse well cannot be acquired merely by much talking. Usually, "chatterboxes" rank very low in the fine art of conversation. Progress is made by acquiring an insight into the qualities of good conversation. This insight is acquired most economically through the observation and analysis of concrete cases. Valuable suggestions may be obtained from reading. Some important studies in this field have been reported. Johnson has attempted to analyze conversation to determine its essential qualities.⁸ The aim of his study was to discover the traits of a good conversationalist. The data for this study was derived from: (1) personal interviews, (2) questionnaires, (3) selected readings, and (4) compilations of individual difficulties. From these combined sources was derived a list of 54 items or traits which were rated by 79 judges for relative importance. The ten highest ranking traits were:

1. The ability to think clearly.
2. The ability to use English effectively.
3. A sense of humor.
4. The ability to speak to the point.
5. The ability to discuss without arguing.
6. Attentiveness.
7. The ability to stimulate others to talk.
8. The ability to discover common interests.
9. The ability to exercise good judgment.
10. The ability to describe.

⁸ Johnson, Roy Ivan, *Determining Standards in English Composition*; *School Review*, 36:757-767, 1928

The explanatory statements sent to the judges reveal more clearly the exact nature of these and other traits. For this reason these statements are reproduced here in their entirety. The pupil may learn more from a careful study of this outline than he would learn by practicing conversation for years. The characteristics of a good conversationalist, as determined by Johnson, are—

I. The ability to stimulate others to talk:

1. He asks timely questions.
2. He shows interest and appreciation which evokes further confidence.
3. He makes statements that provokes responses.

II. The ability to give and take:

1. He can stand a good-natured "thrust."
2. He is not sensitive to criticism.
3. He can indulge in good natured raillery without giving offense.

III. The ability to use concrete illustrations:

1. He is ready with a specific experience to illustrate some general idea.
2. He knows the value of "for example."

IV. The ability to discover common interests:

1. He steers conversation towards topics that will be interesting to all members of the conversational group.
2. He keeps himself informed with regard to the interests and activities of his friends.

V. The ability to tell a good story:

1. He knows something of the art of story telling.

2. He can "lighten up" the conversation with an interesting anecdote.

3. He does not bore his hearers with tedious details.

VI. The ability to discuss without arguing:

1. He "dissents by suggestion rather than by assertion."

2. He is not obtrusive, passionate, or obstinate.

3. He never uses argument as a conversational device.

4. His purpose is not to change somebody else's opinion, but to express his own clearly.

VII. Attentiveness:

1. He does not interrupt.

2. He knows how to be a good listener.

3. He does not "let his mind wander."

4. He looks at the speaker.

VIII. A good memory:

1. He recalls clearly the incidents he wishes to relate.

2. He remembers the circumstances of a former meeting.

3. He remembers people's names.

IX. Informality:

1. He talks in an easy, rambling fashion.

2. He is not ceremonious in his speech or action.

3. He uses colloquial expressions.

4. There is no "stiffness" in his conversation.

X. Modesty:

1. He is reserved in the discussion of his own affairs.

2. He does not thrust himself into the conversation.

3. He is not egotistic.

4. He does not try to impress others with his importance.

XI. Pleasing voice qualities:

1. There is a pleasing rhythm in his speech.
2. His voice is properly modulated.
3. He enunciates his words clearly.

XII. Tact:

1. He steers conversation away from topics that might give offense.
2. He says "the right thing" in trying circumstances.
3. He knows how to disagree courteously rather than belligerently.

XIII. A wide range of interest:

1. He has a genuine interest in many worth-while things.
2. He likes to know what is going on in the world.
3. He has an abiding interest in people.

This analysis is given for illustration and not for servile or blind imitation. This outline provides some insight into the qualities of good conversation and provides something definite to teach and learn. Having discovered the qualities of good conversation, the pupil should check continually his own efforts in the light of these standards. But the pupil should not attempt to improve on all these points at one time. Improvement on forty, or more, at one time is impossible, since one can not even think of so many traits in one act of thought. Consequently, the pupil should center his attention on one point at a time and check himself carefully on this

point. For example, the pupil may center his attention on learning to converse without arguing. If he finds that he has a tendency to resort to argument, he begins to guard against this fault. He holds this tendency in check and builds up the habit of using suggestion rather than assertion. He aims to express his own opinions clearly and not to change some one else's opinions. Effort is centered on this point until considerable progress has been made; then attention is directed to some other trait or quality of good conversation. Thus the pupil should proceed point by point to acquire the characteristics of a good conversationalist.

Another important factor is *properly distributed practice*. Practice should be distributed among these points or traits according to their difficulty of attainment and the needs of the pupil. Some pupils will need much more practice on learning to discuss without arguing than they will on learning to be modest. Others will need more practice on modesty than they will on informality. The efficient teacher will distribute practice according to the needs of the individual pupil.

Practice on the traits of a good conversationalist may well be distributed over the high school period by assigning to each semester one or two traits for study and practice throughout the semester. To be effective practice should be directed at specific traits rather than general improvement.

A fourth factor is *practice applied to the point of error*. Practice should be controlled by definite aims as well as motivated by a strong desire to learn. The pupil should be led to evaluate his own conversation in the light of the characteristics of good conversation; then he should try to improve himself at some specific point. Situations

that call naturally for conversation should be utilized for practice. As Walter Barnes has pointed out, there are many opportunities for conversation in connection with school, home, and community life.⁹ In connection with school life, recitations, lunch hours, athletics, and social events provide many opportunities for conversation. In a survey of a group of college students, Stoke and West found a wide range of topics which they grouped into fifty-eight categories.¹⁰ Prominent among these topics were: dates, sports, dancing, clothes, money, studies, grades, gossip, vocations, religion, music, smoking, examinations, teachers, shows, automobiles, debates, travel, literature, art, sex, dreams, and ideals. Perhaps, high school pupils discuss these same topics. What do high school pupils talk about when they are not suppressed and directed by the teacher? An investigation of this problem would be an interesting and worth-while undertaking for a wide awake high school principal or teacher.

Practice should be correlated closely with observation. Observation and analysis, if properly conducted, reveal the essential characteristics of good conversation. Practice without insight tends to make reactions habitual on their present level. Practice in error does not lead to improvement if the pupil does not know that he is making an error. Practice should be undertaken for the express purpose of correcting an error. In brief, observation leads to insight, and practice with insight leads to improvement. Moreover, practice to be effective must be applied to the point of error and with the idea of eliminating the error.

⁹ Barnes, Walter, *English for American High Schools*, p. 17, Rand and McNally, New York, 1931

¹⁰ Stoke, S. M., and West, E. D., *Conversational Interests of College Students*; *School and Society*, 32:567-570, 1930.

A fifth factor is *definite standards of attainment*. Setting up definite standards of attainment provides specific aims for practice and motivates activity designed to attain these aims. These standards may be derived from an analysis of the essential characteristics of conversation similar to that made by Johnson and reviewed in the previous pages of this chapter. For example, a pupil may set up as a specific aim for a semester the development of the ability to stimulate others to talk or the ability to give and take, *especially take*, in conversation. Instead of trying to improve on all points, the pupil tries to improve on one point at a time. Each pupil should be led to formulate a definite plan of procedure for the improvement of his own conversation. One pupil may need to learn to ask timely questions, while another may need to use more tact. One may be oversensitive to criticism; another may be lacking in interest and in appreciation of the opinion of others. This procedure should be followed until all the characteristics of good conversation have been set up, in turn, as definite aims; and reasonable progress has been made in their attainment.

Finally, there should be *frequent checking* of the pupil's efforts against the standards that have been set up for attainment. The usual method of rating a pupil's work on a percentage or letter scale has but little value for the learner. Correcting formal errors whenever they occur does but little good. It is more effective to concentrate correction and elimination on a few errors throughout a given term or semester. To be of value to the learner, checking must be diagnostic, and criticisms must be constructive and not mere fault-finding. A good plan is to devise a score card covering the points that have been set up as definite standards to be attained in the present

semester. If a pupil makes a low score on any point covered by the score card, give him specific suggestions to help him overcome his weakness. A score card similar to Figure 1 may be used to check the pupil's efforts and to keep him informed of his progress.

Score Card for Conversation (Points I and II)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Score</i>				
	5	10	15	20	25
I. Ability to stimulate others:					
1. Asking timely questions					
2. Showing interest and ap					
3. Making provoking statements					
II. Ability to give and take.					
1. Taking a good-natured thrust					
2. Not over-sensitive to criticism					
3. Not offensive to others					
Total Score					

Figure 1. Score card for conversation

Check the pupil on each subpoint on this score card giving him a definite score. Teach the pupil how to use the score card to check himself and others. For average performance give a score of 15; for better than average, a score of 20; and for less than average, a score of 10. Very poor performance may be given a score of 5; excellent performance, a score of 25. Score each point separately and add the score for a total score. The total score may be used to measure the pupil's progress. Scores on the various points have a diagnostic value. If the pupil makes a low score on "not offensive to others," he should interpret this to mean that he needs to give more attention to making his conversation agreeable to others. Likewise, if the pupil makes a high score on "asking timely questions," this means that he is approaching the goal with respect to this standard.

Similar score cards may be constructed covering all the important points in good conversation. The pupil should practice on each point in turn and check himself on the appropriate score card. Since conversation is largely an out-of-school activity, the main thing that the school can do is to teach the pupil to train himself in the art of conversation. However, the school can stimulate the desire to learn, and can help the pupil to acquire an insight into the essential characteristics of good conversation.

SUMMARY

Stimulate the desire to be a good conversationalist mainly by emphasizing the value of being skillful in this art. Provide an insight into the essential characteristics of good conversation through observation and analysis of the conversation of others and through reading the analyses that have been made by writers in this field. Distribute practice according to the needs of the pupil over all the essential qualities of good conversation, but concentrate on one, or two, points at a time. Lead the pupil to set up definite standards of attainment and to check his efforts in the light of these standards. Practice to overcome defects and check the results on an improvised score card.

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LETTER WRITING

The psychological principles applying to the teaching of conversation apply also to the teaching of letter writing. In fact, conversation and letter writing have many common factors. Letter writing has been termed, "talking on paper." For the convenience of the reader the most important of these principles are restated here in the form of a series of questions—

1. How can letter writing be motivated? Or, how can the desire to become a good letter writer be stimulated?
2. How can insight into what constitutes good letter writing be acquired?
3. How can practice be applied to the point of error?
4. How can practice be controlled by definite aims?
5. How can progress in letter writing be checked, and the pupil kept informed of his progress?

First, how can the desire to become a good letter writer be stimulated? Perhaps, the best source of motivation is a consideration of the value of the ability to write a good letter. Today, there are many other forms of communication; but they cannot wholly take the place of the social or business letter. Moreover, letter writing is a form of expression which we practice from childhood to old age. It has been well said that one may write his first letter to his grandparents and his last letter to his grandchildren. Everyone has occasion to write to relatives and friends. Occasionally, everyone may need to write a business letter. Practically all youths utilize the friendly letter as a means of furthering their social interests. Naturally, a poorly written letter will not make so good an impression on the fair lady or the handsome man as one that is well written.

Again, setting up standards of attainment motivates letter writing as it does any other form of activity. A pupil will strive harder to attain a certain level of efficiency, if he has set up this level as a definite goal to be reached in a given time. Also, keeping a pupil informed of his progress in letter writing stimulates him to greater activity, and provides an opportunity for both group and self competition to operate. Then, too, concrete illustrations may be used to advantage.

Davisson relates a case coming under his observation in which a young man failed to secure an important position because of a poorly written letter.¹¹ The young man was intelligent and generally competent. He appeared to have all the necessary qualifications, but the position was given to another man. The disappointed young man's

¹¹ Davisson, E. B., *Tips on How to Write Letters*, American Magazine, 95:59, April, 1929.

letter had gone unanswered, because it was so poorly written that the manager had misjudged him. An interview convinced the manager that this young man had plenty of ability. In fact, he had more ability than the man that had been employed. A poorly written letter was directly responsible in this case for the failure to secure an important position. The teacher may well equip himself with many similar illustrations gleaned from his own reading and observation to be used in impressing the idea of the value of the ability to write a good letter. This concrete material will be more effective than abstract statements.

Second, How can the pupil be led to acquire a *clear insight into what constitutes good letter writing*? What are the characteristics of a good letter? Most textbooks overemphasize the value of practice in letter writing. Practice in and of itself may contribute nothing at all to insight. The general effect of practice is to fix reactions on their present level. Practice may increase the speed and accuracy of a certain type of reaction without changing the general character of the response. For example, much pecking on the typewriter with the forefingers may increase the speed and accuracy of the reactions, but practice of this type does not lead to the efficient use of all the fingers, or to the touch system. One cannot acquire the approved system of operating a typewriter by practising the "hunt and peck" system. Nor can one learn to write superior letters by writing many inferior letters. To improve the general quality of his letters the learner must gain some new insight into the qualities of a good letter; he must see clearly what he needs to do to improve. So to learn to write better letters

he must acquire more insight—not merely have more practice. For acquiring insight observation and analysis of letters written by others is more effective than much practice. Many textbooks provide good analyses of the form of a letter; but, as a rule, they are deplorably weak in their treatment of the body of a letter. Indefinite terms are employed without sufficient explanation and illustration. For example, it is stated that social letters should be informal, natural, interesting, and should reveal the writer's personality; but the writer is not told how to make his letters informal, natural, and interesting. Likewise, the textbook writer fails to explain the meaning of personality and to tell the pupil how to reveal his personality in his letters. How to make his letters informal, natural, interesting, and revealing is what the pupil needs to learn. How can this insight be acquired? A good method of procedure is to read and analyze good models of letter writing. Read and analyze good letters to discover their essential characteristics. A good illustration of the type of analysis that should be made by the pupils working under the direction of the teacher is found in Johnson's monograph on English Expression.

The aim of Johnson's study is to establish well-defined objectives for the teaching of letter writing.¹² To this end, four groups of letters were analyzed: Group I, 150 letters contributed by women of recognized standing throughout the country; Group II, 296 letters from a collection of modern literary letters; Group III, 50 business letters submitted by the presidents and managers of business and educational institutions; and Group IV,

¹² Johnson, Roy Ivan, *English Expression, A Study in Curriculum Building*; Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1926.

1000 letters written by young women of approximately freshmen standing in college.

From an analysis of the letters in Groups I and II the following characteristics of a good letter were derived—

I. Courtesy:

1. Give due attention to questions which have been asked.
2. Never fail to express expected congratulations.
3. Never fail to acknowledge obligations. Show a sense of gratitude.
4. Express good wishes.
5. Make inquiry about matters which you know are of importance and interest to the recipient of the letter.
6. Recount personal details or incidents in the light of what you know of the recipient's interests.
7. Apologize if there is any occasion for it.
8. Express or imply respect, esteem, or affection.
9. Adapt style and subject-matter to age and probable interest of the reader (e. g., letters to children).
10. Adapt tone and subject-matter to circumstances and occasions.

II. Informality:

1. Use of colloquialisms, or conversational expressions.
2. Use of invented expressions.
3. Use of pen sketches and illustrations.
4. Elimination of over-formal headings and conclusions.
5. Use of figures of speech humorously exaggerated.
6. Use of light, playful, or familiar tone.
7. Narration of commonplace details.

III. Humor, Sources of:

1. They smile sympathetically at the weaknesses of human nature.
2. They depict absurd situations.
3. They exaggerate—intentionally.
4. They juxtapose apparently unrelated thoughts.
5. They make reference to amusing experiences.
6. They narrate humorous incidents.
7. They indulge in play on words.

IV. Expression of opinions, attitudes, and feelings:

The letters of distinguished and literary persons were distinctly opinional. They did not contain description or narration, but they were rich in the author's intellectual reactions towards life. They were not, however, philosophical essays.

V. Cheerfulness or optimism:

The letters of distinguished and literary persons had a prevailing atmosphere of optimism. Indulgence in despondency occurred only rarely. Practically all the letters from women of recognized leadership contained a cheerful outlook on life.

VI. Few centers of organization:

The letters from distinguished and literary persons contained few instances of loose organization. They were confined to a few, clearly unified subjects of thought. They were not scrappy, nor gossippy, nor did they contain an incoherent mass of details.

Similarly, the student's letters were analyzed to determine the types of errors which they contained. It was found that the three most frequent errors were in punctua-

tion, sentence structure, and spelling. The errors in punctuation constituted 25 % of the total in both social and business letters. Inferior humor was present in most of the letters of this group. The two most prevalent humor devices were: interpolated laughter, ha! ha! ha!, and tragic occurrences, as the failure of recipes.

Barnes presents a similar list of characteristics which may be used to supplement Johnson's outline:

I. The letter resembles conversation.

1. It is more selective.
2. It is more carefully organized.
3. It is more formal.

II. The letter should be natural.

1. It should present the writer's personality.
2. It is a portrait of the writer painted by himself.

III. The letter must be appropriate.

Suited to the circumstances under which it is written, e. g., expressing sympathy or extending congratulations.

IV. The letter must show spontaneity.

1. It should seem to be impulsive.
2. It may contain quirks of speech and puns and jokes.
3. The diction may be of the colloquial type.
4. Some slang may be used, but not too freely. It should be of the desirable sort.
5. Idioms, figures of speech, picturesque and humorous phrases may be used.

V. The letter should be interesting to the correspondent.

1. It may be assumed that the correspondent wants to know about the writer and his experiences.

2. Kindred interests should constitute the framework of friendly letters.

VI. The letter should be courteous.

1: It should display interest in the affairs of the correspondent.

2. It should answer questions and comment on statements in the correspondent's last letter.

3. It should be written as clearly and legibly as possible with pen and ink.¹³

Rothenberg set up the following criteria of a good personal letter:

1. Spontaneity
2. Respectful intimacy
3. Individuality
4. Originality
5. Sincerity
6. Humor
7. Eloquent beauty
8. Deep pathos.¹⁴

Thus through the reading and analysis of actual letters and articles on letter writing the pupil may be led to an insight into the characteristics of a good letter. These characteristics then become for the pupil the standards

¹³ Barnes, Walter, *English for American High Schools*, pp. 106-109; Rand, McNally Company, New York, 1931

¹⁴ Rothenberg, J. C., *Teaching the Personal Letter*; *English Journal*, 22:323-324, 1933.

for judging the quality of social letters. These standards should be expressed in specific rather than in general statements. However, a general term like courtesy may be used if it is analyzed into more specific terms as it is in Johnson's study.

The Business Letter

Likewise, the business letter should be analyzed to determine the essential qualities of this type of letter. Helpful suggestions may be obtained from the reading of books and magazine articles on the business letter. For example, Davisson gives the following tips on the writing of sales letters:

1. Focus your mind on the reader's wants.
2. Profit is more interesting to the reader than a description of your goods.
3. Use good English, good paper, and good penmanship.¹⁵

Davisson states further that a letter of application should show interest in the employer's wants, and a desire to do more than draw a salary. To illustrate his points Davisson presents the following letter:

Dear Sir:

I have just read your advertisement. You evidently want someone who understands what are the real duties of a secretary. He must transcribe your dictation accurately, promptly,

¹⁵ Davisson, E B, *Tips on How to Write Letters*, American Magazine, 95:59, April, 1928.

“proof read” your letters for possible errors,
 receive your callers politely, civilly,
 separate the important ones from those who
 should wait or come again,
 open and assort your mail,
 make a list of your appointments, reminding you
 of them at the right time,
 keep your personal accounts,
 keep your business to himself.

My experience covers eight years of stenographic
 and secretarial service, with knowledge of bookkeep-
 ing. Age 25 years. Unmarried.

Let me come to see you. I feel confident of ful-
 filling your requirements. My telephone is Main
 6000.

Yours truly,

.....

If you were an employer, would you make an appoint-
 ment with this applicant? What are the good qualities
 of this letter?

Knight had pupils bring sample letters to class to be
 analyzed.¹⁶ Committees cut up and arranged these
 letters under: headings, salutations, body of the letter,
 and complimentary close. The characteristics of the body
 of the letter was described as concise, clear, and correct.

Lesser states that the desirable qualities of a good
 business letter are the five C's: conciseness, completeness,
 clearness, courteousness, and correctness.¹⁷ An attempt

¹⁶ Knight, Louise, *Introducing the Study of the Business Letter*, Eng-
 lish Journal, 24 225-226, 1933

¹⁷ Lesser, Goldie, *Byroads to Business*, English Journal, 24.225-226,
 1933.

was made to develop these qualities by having each member of the class write a letter asking for information concerning the vocation which he wished to follow. These letters were judged in the light of the five C's, approved by the teacher and mailed. Then the letters received in return were read and evaluated in the light of these same standards.

Baker states that the ideal business letter has the following qualities:

1. It should be grammatical.
2. It should be correctly punctuated.
3. It should be correctly spelled.
4. It should be free from tiresome, worn out, business expressions.
5. It should be brief, but express the thought fully and clearly.
6. It should be courteous and tactful.¹⁸

Thus by reading and analyzing a considerable number of specimen letters the pupils should acquire a fair insight into the qualities of a good business letter. These qualities then become the objectives for their own work in business letter writing, and the standards by which they evaluate their efforts. The pupils should be directed in making an outline of these qualities as a means of summarizing and organizing their ideas of a good business letter.

The Qualities of A Good Business Letter

I. Formal correctness:

1. Heading

¹⁸ Baker, Josephine, *Correct Business Letter Writing*, Correct English Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

2. Salutation
 3. Body of the letter
 4. Complimentary close.
- II. Clearness:
1. Statements should be definite.
 2. Use common words.
 3. Employ good sentence structure.
- III. Conciseness:
1. Letter should be brief.
 2. The letter should pertain to only one transaction, or separate transactions should be clearly differentiated.
- IV. Courteousness:
1. Answers all points of inquiry.
 2. Apologize for oversight or seeming neglect.
 3. Give evidence of a kindly attitude.
 4. Express appreciation for patronage.
- V. Grammatical Correctness:
1. Use correct language forms.
 2. Spell all words correctly.
 3. Punctuate correctly all parts of the letter.
 4. Capitalize correctly.
 5. Employ good sentence structure.

Third, how can *practice be applied to the point of error?* Having acquired a fair *insight* into the characteristics of a good social and business letters, the pupil is ready to begin practice in letter writing, and to profit from his practice. He can check and evaluate his own letters in the light of these qualities. This type of checking will reveal to the pupil his weak points, his errors. To be a distinct aid to learning, the marking of papers must be diagnostic. A mark of 70 or a D does not convey much valuable information to the pupil. Of course, a

low grade is interpreted to mean a poor quality of work, but it does not reveal to the pupil the weak points in his work. Again, it does not do much good to mark all the grammatical errors and hand the paper back to the pupil, for he cannot do much in the way of correcting all these errors at one time. Not much progress can be made in the elimination of errors unless the pupil concentrates on a few at a time. A better plan is to check the pupil's efforts against the standards set up by analyzing specimen letters. By this procedure the pupil can be shown definitely what he needs to do to improve his own letters. Thus practice may be directed at the point of error and undertaken for the express purpose of correcting these errors. Center attention on one quality at a time. Encourage the pupil to try to improve his writing on this point. Practice on all the essential qualities in turn. Repeat the cycle as often as time will permit. The outcome of this procedure should be a marked improvement in the general quality of the pupil's work and a minimum amount of time.

Fourth, *how can practice be controlled and guided by specific aims?* A very common and serious psychological blunder is to attempt to improve on all points at the same time, to improve in general. A more feasible plan is to select one objective and make a strenuous effort to improve in this one direction. For example, have the pupil practice letter writing to improve in formal correctness or in courteousness. Then, set up in turn other specific objectives, as clearness, conciseness, or grammatical correctness. Concentrate attention on one of these elements until considerable improvement is made. Every practice period should be devoted to improvement at one specific

point. General objectives are important as outcomes, but they are too general to guide learning effectively. Specific aims may be derived from the outline of the qualities of a good business or social letter. However, it is not enough to say that a letter should be courteous; the pupil's attention should be directed to the subpoints which explain how to make a letter courteous. These explanatory statements provide the insight that gives effective direction to practice. They provide specific aims for practice and for the evaluation of the pupil's efforts at improvement.

Fifth, *How can progress in letter writing be measured?* The frequent checking of results makes for rapid learning. This factor may be provided for, in part, by arranging the characteristics of a good business or social letter in the form of a score card. A general score card may be arranged, and, also, a special card for the objectives upon which special emphasis is being placed at any one time. The general score card may be used to measure progress over a longer period of time, as a semester or year. The special score card will serve the purpose of directing the pupil's attention to the miniature details of one main objective. For example, the general score card may take the following form—

General Score Card for Business Letters

I. Formal correctness:	1	3	5	Total
1. Heading,				
2. Salutation,				
3. Body of letter,				
4. Complimentary close,				
II. Clearness:				
1. Definite statements,				
2. All necessary details,				
3. Use of common words,				
4. Good sentence structure,				
III. Conciseness:				
1. Brevity,				
2. One transaction,				
3. Relevant material,				
IV. Courteousness:				
1. Inquiries answered,				
2. Apology, if necessary,				
3. Kindly attitude,				
4. Appreciation of patronage,				
V. Grammatical correctness:				
1. Correct forms,				
2. Proper spelling,				
3. Correct punctuation,				
4. Correct capitalization,				
5. Good sentence structure,				
Total points				

Figure 3. General score card for business letter

Score each subpoint 1, 3, or 5. Add these scores for the total score on each main point. The total for a perfect score is 100. An average score would be 60 points, and a very poor score, 20 points. Intermediate points as 2 and 4 may be used if a finer scale is desired.

Similarly, construct a general score card for the social letter. Such a score card will be useful in checking the progress of pupils and in leading them to see on what points they are weak and in need of more practice.

Special Score Card for Formal Correctness

<i>Qualities</i>	<i>Points</i>			
	1	3	5	Total
I. Heading:				
1. Address of writer,				
2. Date,				
3. Position,				
4. Capitalization,				
5. Punctuation,				
II. Salutation:				
1. Position.				
2. Punctuation,				
3. Capitalization,				
4. Appropriateness,				
III. Body of the letter:				
1. Spacing and arrangement,				
2. Paragraphing,				
IV. Complimentary close:				
1. Position,				
2. Punctuation,				
3. Capitalization,				
4. Appropriateness,				
Total Points				

Figure 4. Special score card for formal correctness.

The method of scoring is the same as for the general score card.

Mark a similar score card for each of the other main qualities of a good letter. Construct separate score cards for the two types of letters: social and business. Score each letter written by the pupil on one of these special score cards, checking the point on which effort is being concentrated. Occasionally, score a letter on one of the general score cards.

Willing has prepared a self-checking list of points for the friendly letter that may be used in the same way as these score cards.¹⁹

¹⁹ Willing, M. H., *Valid Diagnosis in High School Composition*; Contributions to Education, No. 230; Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, New York, 1926.

Self-Checking List (Willing)
Score Points for Friendly Letter

	Points	Pupil's Score
1. Space at tip of paper	1	..
2. Half inch margin at left of paper .	1	..
3. Space between heading and greeting, or salutation	1	..
4. Space between greeting and body . .	1	....
5. Space between paragraphs	1	..
6. Space between body and ending or closing	1	....
7. Space between closing and signature .	1	..
8. No erasures, blots, or soiled places . . .	1	..
9. Penmanship legible	3	..
10. Heading at right hand side of paper	1	....
11. No end punctuation, 1st line, 2nd line, 3rd line	3	....
12. Heading on three lines	1	..
13. Heading in right order	1	....
14. Comma after name of city	1	..
15. Comma after day of month	1	....
16. No unnecessary punctuation in heading . .	1	..
17. No capitals omitted in first line of heading	1	....
18. No capitals omitted in second line of heading	1	..
19. No capitals omitted in third line of heading	1	....
20. Salutation even with margin	1	....
21. Comma after salutation	1	....
22. First word of ending capitalized	1	..
23. Comma after ending	1	....
24. First and last name given in signature . . . .		....
25. Signature at right and on line below the closing	1	....
<hr/> Total points		31

Scoring on this check list may be made more flexible by making the total points 100 instead of 31. This result may be achieved by raising each 1 to a 4, and each 3 to a 4.

Progress may be measured, also, through the use of standard scales for measuring composition. The Lewis English Composition Scales are designed especially to measure degrees of excellence in letter writing.²⁰ These scales measure both business and social correspondence. This instrument provides scales for measuring order letters, letters of application, narrative social letters, expository social letters, and simple narration. Each scale consists of a series of specimen letters ranging in merit from very poor to very good. A pupil's letter is rated by comparing it to the samples on the scale and assigning it the appropriate numerical rating.

The testing program should include:

1. Rating samples of the pupils work on standard scales, at least, at the beginning and end of a term's work.
2. Scoring letters written by the pupils on both general and special score cards. This scoring should take the place of the traditional methods of grading and should be done frequently.

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DEBATING

In recent years debating has been the subject of much controversy. The critics say that debating as ordinarily

conducted in high schools is characterized by sophism and even dishonesty. They maintain that the pupil is being trained in trickery rather than sincerity, in rationalization rather than in reflective thinking. Further, these critics charge that the aim of debating is to win a decision rather than to discover and advance the truth. For example, Mangun asserts:

"To train vast numbers of young people to make 'the better case' out of either side of an issue is an ideal preparation for just the kind of sophism of which we already have an overplus."²¹

Similarly, Theodore Roosevelt condemned debating in which the pupil takes the side arbitrarily assigned to him. Roosevelt declared:

"Personally, I have not the slightest sympathy with debating contests in which each side is arbitrarily assigned a proposition and told to maintain it without the least reference to whether those maintaining it believe it, or not. I know that under our system this is necessary for lawyers, but I emphatically disbelieve in it as regards general discussion of political, social and industrial matters. What we need is to turn out of our colleges young men with ardent convictions on the side of right; not young men who can make a good argument for either right or wrong as their interest bids them."²²

Again, these critics claim that the school fosters intellectual dishonesty in debating. The coaches prepare the speeches which are memorized and delivered as their own by members of the team. Such contests have but little

²¹ Mangun, V. L., *Mind Development Caused by Debates*; Educational Review, 74:155-161, 1927.

²² Roosevelt, Theodore, *On Debating*, Outlook, 103-406; Outlook Publishing Company, N. Y.

educational value for the members of the team, for they are contests between coaches rather than between pupils. The pupil is subjected to a process of forcible feeding with poor digestion and assimilation. Moreover, the pupil is being trained in false pretense; while the coach is learning misrepresentation and deceit.

Attack is made, also, on the contest feature of debating. It is alleged that the primary aim is to overcome an opponent, to win. The debater resorts often to unfair tactics in order to outwit his opponent. The advancement of truth is sacrificed on the altar of victory. Then, too, decisions are sometimes unfair. Victories are obtained without being really won. The judges may be influenced unconsciously more by their opinions and prejudices than they are by the merits of the arguments presented by affirmative or negative. In fact, it is next to impossible to weigh arguments impartially against a background of opinions and prejudices; and wholly impartial judges cannot be found. On the other hand, if the judge is aware of his bias and attempts to make allowance for this factor, he may be too partial to the other side. The difficulty in rendering a fair decision grows out of the fact that an argument which agrees with the judge's opinions seem to him to be more weighty than an equally good argument disagreeing with his views.

Are these criticisms of debating valid?

Frankly, it must be admitted that the ordinary debater is a *rationalizer* rather than a *reflective thinker*. Moreover, not only is this distinction valid; but also, it is very significant. To rationalize is to accept uncritically a proposition as true; and, then, proceed to argue that the proposition is true. The rationalizer, being biased, is largely immune to arguments against the proposition

in which he believes. On the other hand, he seizes with avidity on any evidence supporting his beliefs. If evidence or proof is lacking, he "asserts without fear of successful contradiction" that the proposition is true. In brief, rationalization in debating is arguing that our beliefs and opinions are true, that our side of the question is by far the better side. In contrast to this attitude, the reflective thinker sets out to determine whether a proposition is true or false. He makes a determined effort to assume an unbiased attitude. He does not care whether he finds the proposition true or false. The dominating aim is to discover the truth. The consuming passion is to know the truth and to follow wherever the truth may lead. The reflective thinker maintains a truly scientific attitude.

However, debating should not be ruled out of court because of rationalization. This type of mental activity is quite common in the pulpit, on the political platform, and even in the halls of Congress. Frequently, classroom discussions do not rise above the level of rationalization. Shall we condemn all these forms of discussion on the grounds of rationalization, and recommend that they be abolished? Such an extreme position is unwarranted. A better policy is to try to improve their quality. Pupils need to be taught to do reflective thinking. Reflective thinking should be encouraged in all forms of discussion. Even though rationalization may occur, the clash of opinion in debate stimulates further study and consideration of the problem; and may even cause a change of viewpoint on the part of a participant. Has not the reader had the experience of finding his beliefs changing after contact with refuting evidence? Furthermore, many members of the audience do not have any strong convic-

tions with respect to the issues being debated. They are open-minded and may be influenced by the weight of argument. Listening to the arguments pro and con provides them with data which they can use in shaping their ideas and attitudes on the question. In so far as they are open-minded, they will accept the viewpoint supported by the stronger arguments.

Moreover, the debaters acquire valuable training in collecting and organizing material for a definite purpose. If debating is well directed, the pupil acquires a method of study that will be useful to him in the pursuit of his studies in college and in his intellectual advancement in after life. Then, too, the pupil gets valuable training in public speaking. He learns to appear at ease before an audience and to express himself in clear and forceful English. Surely, these values are worthy of more consideration than is the criticism that debating is a process of rationalization. Furthermore, the elimination of debating would not be a remedy for rationalization, because rationalization is a common and frequent form of mental activity among non-debaters. Pupils get plenty of practice in rationalization without joining a debating team. Participation in debating may refine the methods of rationalization without increasing the tendency to engage in this type of mental activity. Every pupil will be an habitual rationalizer, if he is not carefully trained in the methods of reflective thinking—and then he will continue to rationalize.

The school may avoid assigning arbitrarily a pupil to one side or the other of a question by organizing both an affirmative and a negative team, and permitting the individual debater to select the side he favors. The choice of sides should be made after a careful study of

the issues involved in the question selected for discussion. This practice would make a close approach to reflective thinking, and would encourage honesty and sincerity on the part of the debaters. The objection that the coach prepares the speeches for the debaters may be overcome by substituting a director of debating for the coach. The director would make training in debating primary and the winning of decisions secondary. He would direct the pupils in their study of the question, in the organization of their outlines or briefs, and in the presentation of their arguments to the audience; but he would not be over-anxious to win decisions. The director has the attitude of the teacher rather than that of the coach with his inordinate desire to win victories.

Again criticism is being directed at the contest feature of debating. It has been alleged that most of the evils of debating are traceable to the desire to win. This emphasis on decisions, it is stated, has led to committed speeches prepared by the coaches, to "canned" rebuttals, and to trickery in the interpretation of the question. In addition, it is claimed that decisions are often unfair. Doubtless, there is some validity to these criticisms. Many of the evils of debating can be traced to the desire to win decisions, but it does not follow that decisions should be abolished. Some things may be said in favor of contest debating. This type of debating provides more motivation than the non-decision type. Every normal person delights in a contest. The contest feature stimulates the speakers to put forth their best efforts and insures larger and more interested audiences. Then, too, decisions provide an opportunity to cultivate respect for opponents. In the contests of life one cannot always be a winner. It is important that the contestant learn to be a good loser,

that he cultivate the qualities of a good sportsman. The contest provides an opportunity to acquire the modesty of the winner and the gameness and good sportsmanship of the loser. The solution to the problem is therefore not the elimination of decisions but a wiser direction of these contests.

Is there any validity to the criticism that decisions are often unfair? Psychologically speaking, a strictly impartial judgment is next to impossible. Judgments based upon subjective factors are characterized by a high degree of unreliability. Prejudices, beliefs, opinions, and home town "complexes" are subtle factors that influence the judges in rendering decisions. If a judge is aware of the influence of these factors, he may go too far in his efforts to counterbalance them. When a decision is close, he may vote against the home team just to convince himself and others that he is impartial—and his decision may be wrong. If a judge is not aware of the influence of his own beliefs and opinions—and many are not aware of the influence of these factors—he may judge the question rather than the arguments. Consequently, it is next to impossible for the judges to render a fair decision when the contest is close. However, it does not follow that decisions should be abolished. Imperfections are to be found in every activity, but imperfection does not justify abolition. On the other hand, some things may be said in favor of decisions, even though they are, to a considerable extent unreliable. The stimulation to the debaters and the interest aroused in the audience may far outweigh the evils of unfair decisions.

In baseball, the umpire's decisions are not always correct and they are often very unpopular, but they make possible the nation's most popular sport. Moreover, de-

cisions are usually fair except in very evenly contested debates. In such cases the prejudices of the judges may be the deciding factor rather than the slight differences in the weight of the arguments. But, in such cases, no great harm is done, for debaters must learn to respect opponents and to be good losers. On the other hand, decisions, though not always fair, make possible the contest feature of debating.

To obviate the objections to decisions by a board of three or five judges, some have advocated substituting the audience decision. It is urged that audience decisions provide a more natural situation for the debater, giving him an opportunity to convince the audience and to persuade them to accept his point of view. But the audience decision may result in a packed house favoring a chosen side. Again, an audience may be influenced by race or sectional prejudice. It would be a rare occasion to find an audience equally divided in their reaction to a debatable question. However, the bias of the audience may be controlled largely by asking every one to record his opinion of the question before the debate begins. After the debate, a second vote is taken. Only the votes that have changed sides are counted. The debaters that succeed in winning over the most votes win the contest.

A recent development is the substitution of an expert judge for the audience or board of judges. The expert judge is a competent critic of the process of debating. His primary interest is in the process of debating rather than in the merits of the question or in the winning of decisions. His comments on the debate are valuable to the debaters. The critic judge points out the strong and weak points of the debate. His decisions are likely to

be fair and his comments enlightening to the contestants, to the directors, and to the audience.

Perhaps, the best way to preserve and advance the educational features of debating is to retain the contest feature with the decision being made by the audience or by an expert judge.

Finally, debating should be a training in reflective thinking rather than in rationalization. The aim should be to discover truth rather than to win decisions.

Teaching Debating

Debating should not be required of all pupils. Comparatively few people engage in debating as an out-of-school activity; and there is but little educational value in training a pupil for an activity in which he will never engage in life after school. Participation in debating should be the privilege of the few and not the duty and burden of the many. Only those who have considerable capacity for and a genuine interest in debating should be encouraged to enroll for this activity. Efficiency in debating requires some capacity for logical thinking, and this capacity is sadly lacking in some pupils. Many pupils are never able to sense the real significance of the terms "proof" and "evidence." These pupils appear to believe that "assertion without fear of successful contradiction" establishes a point. A pupil with this type of mind should not be encouraged, and certainly not required to participate in debating. Pupils should be admitted to the class in debating on the basis of interests, capacities, and needs.

The same psychological principles of learning apply to the teaching of debating as to the other forms of

composition. These principles were presented in connection with conversation and repeated in the discussion of letter writing. Only the specific applications to debating will be stated in this connection.

Motivation is the first problem in any type of learning. So we may well ask: *How can the learning of debating be motivated?* As a rule, debating contests do not draw crowds so large as those attending football games or carnivals. Usually the audience is apathetic rather than excited. Speaking to empty seats or to an apathetic audience is not a particularly stimulating type of activity. However, if the contest feature is retained, debating does appeal to some of the strong human urges as dominance and mastery. Also, the desire to excel, to win, whether native or acquired, is an outstanding trait of the human personality. The struggle is not so much for absolute attainment as it is to excel others. Winning is always a thrilling experience, even though nothing important has been won. As witnesses to this fact call the roll of "marathon dancers" and "flag pole sitters." In fact, it has been pointed out by the critics of debating that the ruling aim is not to discover truth but to outwit an opponent. There is much truth in this criticism. On the other hand, the desire to win is an unfailing source of motive power.

Moreover, capacity and interest have a fairly close correlation. If pupils are selected on the basis of capacity, the problem of motivation is largely solved. Pupils like to engage in activities that result in successful accomplishment. Fitness for the task and the desire to excel will solve the problem of motivation for most pupils.

In addition, a sense of value should provide considerable motivation. The type of pupil that should participate in debating will likely do considerable public speak-

ing in later life. The preacher, the lawyer, the reformer, the statesman should be effective public speakers. Arguing on either side of a question is excellent training for the young man who will later prosecute or defend the alleged criminal as the occasion may demand. It is training of the finest type for a young man who will later become a politician and endeavor to win votes by addressing the crowds from the political platform. In campaign speeches we have rationalization at its highest and best—or worst. In brief, participation in debating is valuable training for any one who will need to convince and persuade audiences. The sense of value is always one of the best sources of motivation.

How can insight into what constitutes good debating be acquired? The development of this insight is one of the most difficult problems that will be encountered in teaching debating. Practice will not of itself develop the necessary insight. It is easily possible to practice debating for years without much gain in skill and efficiency. Improvement comes by gaining clear insight rather than by much practice. How can this insight be acquired? First, give the pupils an opportunity to listen to some good debating, and have them try to analyze the activity of the debaters to discover the good qualities of their performance. Then have them read some good books on debating and make a list of the characteristics of good debating. Follow this exercise with the reading and analysis of some good specimens of debating to discover more specifically the qualities of high class performance in this field. Arrange the factors discovered in this study in the form of an outline. The outline which follows is merely suggestive.

The Essential Elements of Debating

- I. The Statement and Interpretation of the Question:
 1. State in the form of a single and definite proposition.
 2. Select a timely and interesting proposition.
 3. Explain the meaning of all important terms used.
 4. Make the interpretation reasonable and fair.
 5. Interpret the question in the light of its history.
- II. The Determining of the Issues:
 1. Select a few main points—usually, not more than three or four.
 2. Select points that can be supported with strong evidence.
 3. State the issues in the form of definite questions.
- III. The Presentation of the Arguments:
 1. Selecting the material evidence.
 2. Preparing the brief or outline:
 - (1) Introduction,
 - (2) Body,
 - (3) Conclusion.
 3. Types of proof:
 - (1) Testimony—
 - a. Of recognized authorities,
 - b. Of authority in a special field,
 - c. Of unprejudiced observers,
 - d. Of several authorities.
 - (2) Instances or cases—
 - a. Several cited,
 - b. Familiar to listeners,
 - c. Typical, not exceptional cases.
 - (3) Statistics—

- a. Use only a few sets of figures.
 - b. Present figures in round numbers.
 - c. Use comparisons to make figures meaningful and significant to the audience.
4. The presentation of proofs:
- (1) Present arguments with clearness and force.
 - (2) Use correct English.
 - (3) Be courteous to opponents.
 - (4) Be respectful to the audience.
 - (5) Maintain good posture and bearing.
 - (6) Use natural gestures, if any.
 - (7) Speak distinctly.

Having acquired some insight into what constitutes good debating, the pupil is now in a position to profit from practice. His problem now becomes, how can I embody these qualities in my own debating? Being guided by definite standards, practice will lead rapidly to fruitful results. Have the pupils select a question, give it a definite formulation, determine the issues, and present the arguments for or against the proposition. Check the pupil's efforts on a score card based upon the essential qualities of good debating. This definite evaluation of the pupil's work will lead him to see more clearly what he needs to do to improve. This method of checking enables the pupil to apply practice to the point of error. Provide frequent opportunities to participate in real debating. Actual participation provides a better learning situation than does make believe. Real participation stimulates a stronger desire to become proficient in the art of debating. Practice should be continued until reasonable progress has been made towards the goals

that have been set up; or as long as the time schedule will permit.

But the pupil cannot improve on all points at the same time. He should center his efforts at improvement on the specific processes singly and in turn. For example, effort may be centered for a time on the statement and interpretation of debatable questions. Then the problem of determining the issues may be considered. Thus one by one each essential quality becomes in turn the specific goal of the pupil's endeavor. Definite charts should be developed to serve as goals to be attained and as standards by which to evaluate the pupil's efforts. To be of much value to the pupil, evaluations must be diagnostic.

In the beginning of this chapter it was pointed out that practicing and error may lead to its elimination. The validity of this hypothesis may well be questioned. One does not learn to say, "he doesn't," unless saying "he don't" becomes annoying; that is, unless one is fully aware that "he don't" is an error and this error is annoying. However, a knowledge of errors does enable one to be on his guard against them, and causes him to be annoyed by these same errors. For this reason the pupil should become familiar with the common fallacies in reasoning. Then he can check his own as well as his opponent's arguments for the common fallacies. A careful study should be made of the common fallacies in debating. Have the pupil read several authors on fallacies and make a list of the more common ones. Provide several concrete examples of each fallacy to develop understanding on the part of the pupil. Give the pupil practice in detecting errors in his own reasoning and in the reasoning of others. Since the subject of fallacies is adequately treated in

modern texts on debating and logic, it is unnecessary to enter into an extended discussion in this connection.

SUMMARY

1. Make debating a privilege rather than a requirement. Admit to the class only the pupils that have capacity for and interest in debating.

2. Motivate the pupils through competition, successful participation, and a feeling of value.

3. Provide insight into the essential qualities of good debating through the reading of books and articles on debating, and through the reading and analysis of specimens of good debating.

4. Set up the essential characteristics of good debating as goals to be attained through practice.

5. Check progress on score cards based upon these essential characteristics.

6. Make an effort to improve on one point at a time rather than on all points at the same time.

7. Make a study of the common fallacies in debating and give practice in detecting and exposing these fallacies.

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SUMMARY

The studies reviewed in Chapter One indicate that, in addition to conversation and letter writing, there are several forms of English expression that occur with sufficient frequency to merit attention in the classroom. Chief among these forms are:

1. *Group Discussion* in committees, clubs, and organized groups. Group discussion is, also, a frequent type of classroom activity.

2. *Papers* to be read to audiences of various types.

3. *Reports* prepared to be read and discussed in class. This form may well include, also, term papers which are required by many teachers.

4. *Outlines and Summaries*. Good methods of study often require the making of outlines and summaries.

5. *Storytelling*, including the narration of all kinds of incidents; such as stories, anecdotes, and jokes.

6. *Talking on the Telephone*. This type of expression occurs so frequently that it should not be neglected by the school. Moreover, people do not learn to talk well by much practice; they need instruction.

Each of these forms of English expression should be accorded a treatment similar to that prescribed for conversation and letter writing. However, the same psychological principles apply to all forms of expression. Consequently, an extended discussion of these additional forms would result in tiresome repetition. The method of procedure should be the same as that recommended in the previous discussions; namely:

1. Analysis to discover the essential qualities. This analysis may be made through reading and observation.
2. Practice to acquire the ability to embody these qualities in the pupil's own expression.
3. The setting up of specific aims to guide practice. These aims may be derived from the analysis of essential qualities.
4. Checking results in the light of the aims set up to guide practice. Marks should be diagnostic.
5. Apply practice to the point of error. Attempt to secure improvement on one point at a time rather than on all points at once.

CHAPTER IV

GRAMMAR

Since the publication of Murray's English grammar in 1795, grammar has been taught in the public schools, and, in most schools, has occupied an important place in the curriculum. At first, the English grammars were modeled after the Latin grammars. For this reason, many of the traditional forms and classifications have little or no value from the standpoint of correct usage. Many points that are essential to the correct use of the Latin tongue have no significance in English grammar. Latin is a highly inflectional language; whereas English is only slightly inflectional. For example, Latin nouns change form with case; English nouns change only in the possessive. Also, verb forms are less changeable in English. The same is true of adjectives. So the attempt to apply Latin grammar to the English language resulted in a formal and highly technical grammar much of which had no direct application to usage. Up to about 1900 this formal type of grammar was taught in imitation of the Latin grammar. Apparently, it was assumed that a knowledge of technical grammar would transfer automatically to usage. The pupil parsed words, diagrammed and analyzed sentences, and corrected false syntax with but little emphasis on correct usage in his own English expression. The fact that correct usage did not improve as the knowledge of grammar increased appears to have passed unnoticed by the teacher. Furthermore, when the

more careful observers pointed out that grammar did not transfer to usage, the traditionalist defended grammar by resorting to the venerable doctrine of formal discipline. They asserted that grammar provided good training in logical thinking and contributed to the understanding of literature. So the value of formal grammar was not seriously questioned until the educational psychologists attacked and overthrew the ancient doctrine of formal discipline. Then thoughtful educators began to give serious consideration to the question:

What is the Value of Formal Grammar?

Several attempts have been made to study this question experimentally. As early as 1905, Hoyt made a survey of the teaching of formal grammar to determine the reasons given for teaching this subject. A consensus of opinion was found to the effect that grammar:

- (1) Disciplines the mind;
- (2) Prepares for the study of other languages;
- (3) Gives command of an indispensable terminology;
- (4) Enables one to use better English;
- (5) Aids in the interpretation of literature.

These claims all rested on opinion or subjective judgment. They had not been subjected to experimental treatment. To test their validity, Hoyt devised three tests: One in grammar, one in composition, and one in literary interpretation.¹ He administered these tests to 200 ninth grade pupils in Indianapolis. The results obtained tended

¹ Hoyt, F. S., *The Place of Grammar in the Elementary Curriculum*; Teachers College Record, 7:467-500, 1906.

to refute the claims made for formal grammar. The correlations were found to be:

Grammar and composition . . . . .	.18
Grammar and interpretation . . . . .	.21
Interpretation and composition . . . . .	.28

These correlations are too low to have much significance. They are no higher than the correlation between any two unrelated subjects; as grammar and geography.

Rapeer repeated this experiment in 1913 with a different group of pupils and obtained substantially the same results.² Rapeer concluded that grammar has but little value for elementary pupils, and advocated that formal grammar be postponed until the eighth year, at least.

Briggs conducted a more elaborate experiment to determine the disciplinary value of formal grammar.³ First, a summary was made of the claims for formal grammar made by educational theorists and authors in the field of grammar. Chief among these claims were the statements that formal grammar trains the pupils:

1. To see likenesses and differences;
2. To test a definition critically;
3. To apply a definition thoroughly;
4. To make a rule or definition;
5. To test reasons;
6. To form judgments from data;
7. To be cautious in drawing conclusions;
8. To reason in other fields;
9. To reason syllogistically;
10. To detect catches.

² Rapeer, L. W., *The Problem of Formal Grammar in Elementary Education*; Journal of Educational Psychology, 4:125-137, 1913.

³ Briggs, T. H., *Formal English Grammar As A Discipline*; Teachers College Record, 14:251-345, 1913

Briggs devised or selected tests in each of the values listed, and administered them to pupils in two seventh grades in the Horace Mann School and to the pupils in five public schools in Illinois. The pupils were divided into parallel groups of approximately equal ability. Then for three months one group was taught formal grammar and the other group, composition. After a second set of tests had been administered, the teaching methods were reversed for the two groups for another period of three months. At the end of this second period, the final tests were administered and the results tabulated.

The non-grammar classes gained slightly more than the grammar classes on these tests. Briggs concluded:

"These particular children after the amount of formal grammar that they had, as measured by the means employed, do not show in any of the abilities tested improvement that may be attributed to formal grammar. . . . There is a possible exception in the tests of Group I (ability to see likenesses and differences)."

Seigel and Barr made an investigation to determine the relation of achievement in formal grammar to achievement in applied grammar.⁴ Objective tests in each type of grammar of 100 items each were given to 1000 sophomores and juniors in the high school at Long Beach. The results were tabulated for 304 cases and several correlations computed;

Formal grammar with applied grammar . . . . .	.56
Formal grammar with applied grammar, Intelligence constant . . . . .	.48
Formal grammar with intelligence . . . . .	.40

⁴ Seigel, David, Barr, Nora R, *Relation of Achievement in Formal Grammar to Achievement in Applied Grammar*, Journal of Educational Research, 14 401-402, 1926

English with science	.. . . .	.50
Language with mathematics and science	.	.56
English with language	.. . . .	.446

From these data the conclusion is drawn that no more relationship exists between formal grammar and applied grammar than exists, on the average, between any two high school subjects? Formal grammar has no immediate transfer value as far as applied grammar is concerned.

Asker made a statistical study of the relation of formal grammar to ability in composition and to the ability to judge the correctness of a sentence.⁵ Data were tabulated for 295 freshmen in the University of Washington. The results show only a small amount of transfer of formal grammar to the other abilities tested. It was concluded that, "Knowledge of formal grammar influences the ability to judge the grammatical correctness of a sentence and ability in English composition only to a negligible degree."

What conclusions may be drawn from these attempts to evaluate formal grammar? If we can accept the findings of these studies, formal grammar has very little value of any kind. However, the reliability of these findings may well be questioned. These early studies are lacking in scientific exactness? They represent pioneer work in the field rather than refined procedures. Nevertheless, these studies led to important outcomes. Discussion tended to destroy the current belief in the disciplinary value of formal grammar. Also, the naïve idea that grammar would transfer automatically to usage received a rude jolt. No such transfer was found in any of these investigations. Moreover, the advocates of formal gram-

⁵ Asker, William, *Does Knowledge of Formal Grammar Function?* School and Society, 17:109-111, 1923

mar were placed on the defensive. Articles appeared in the English Journal with titles; such as, "Shall We Abolish Grammar?"⁶ and "The Assault on Grammar."⁷ The value of formal grammar was argued pro and con. As a result a reaction occurred which greatly reduced the emphasis on grammar. When it was discovered that a knowledge of grammar did not transfer automatically to correct usage, many drew the illogical conclusion that grammar had no value and should be abolished from the school curriculum. But this extreme position was indefensible and soon gave way to the saner view that the solution to the problem was not the elimination of grammar, but the teaching of a different type of grammar. This new type of grammar was designated, "functional," and discussion shifted to the question, "How much grammar should be taught?" In other words, how much and what kind of grammar is functional? Also, an attempt was made to define the term, "functional."

Functional Grammar

First, what is meant by the term, "functional grammar?" The phrase has been defined in various ways by different writers. Cross defines functional grammar as that grammar which is useful in guiding speaking and writing.⁸ Leonard states that functional grammar is "that application of the knowledge of a grammatical item which will prevent the commission of an error in English

⁶ Wilson, Emma J., *Shall We Abolish Grammar*, English Journal, 6 308-313, 1917

⁷ Noble, S. G., *The Assault on Formal Grammar* English Journal, 11 150-158, 1922.

⁸ Cross, M. A., *Functional Teaching of English Grammar*, English Journal, 4 636-659, 1915.

or which will assist in the correction of an error already made.”⁹ Shover interprets functional grammar as practical grammar, or those portions of practical grammar which pupils need to know to understand or create their everyday English sentences.¹⁰

In brief, functional grammar is made up of the parts of formal or technical grammar that have a direct application to correct usage. It is that grammar a knowledge of which will enable the pupils to know when they are speaking and writing correctly. For example, the case construction of pronouns is functional, because a knowledge of the case of pronouns is necessary for successful language mastery; whereas the case construction of nouns is non-functional, because nouns do not change their form with case except in the possessive.

However, any statement of the meaning of “functional” grammar is likely to be misleading, for it implies that a knowledge of grammar will function automatically in correct usage. In a strict psychological sense, *no grammar is functional*. A knowledge of practical grammar does not transfer automatically to usage. Any rule of language structure, no matter how practical, which is not already habitual, must be applied consciously until its use becomes habitual. Usage is habit; grammar is a system of knowledge. Knowledge does not control habit automatically. To learn as knowledge that verbs must agree with their subjects in person and number does not eliminate the habit of saying, “they was,” or “he don’t.” These errors must be blocked out consciously and the

⁹ Leonard, J. Paul, *Functional Grammar—What and Where?* English Journal 22:729-735, 1933.

¹⁰ Shover, Esther May, *How Much English Grammar Can High School Pupils Learn?* English Journal, 23:568-575, 1934.

correct responses substituted on every occasion until the right forms become habitual. Grammar is therefore not functional in the sense that a knowledge of practical grammar automatically controls usage. Grammar must be applied consciously until the correct forms become habitual. Ideas do not carry over to usage; they must be carried over until their application becomes habitual to the pupil.

Although a knowledge of grammar does not carry over to usage, it does not follow that grammar has no value. A working knowledge of grammar does enable the pupil to become his own language censor. If a pupil is interested in improving his expressive ability, a knowledge of grammar may be applied to the avoidance and correction of errors.

But if the teacher is to emphasize only functional or practical grammar, she must have an accurate knowledge of the rules and principles of grammar which have a direct application to correct usage. *What should be the content of a course in functional grammar?* One of the most extensive investigations in this field is that of Stormzand and O'Shea.¹¹ They made a study of English expression in various types of writing: English authors, newspapers, pupil's compositions from fourth grade through college, letters, and light fiction. Ten thousand sentences representing all grades of current usage were analyzed and parsed. The problem was approached from two viewpoints:

(1) What does present day usage advise regarding the content of a course in grammar? and (2) What does present day need advise regarding the content of a

¹¹ Stormzand, M. J., and O'Shea, M. V., *How Much English Grammar?* pp. 307 f; Warwick and York, Inc, Baltimore, Md., 1934.

course in grammar; particularly with regard to the relative emphasis that should be given to various topics? This extensive body of material was analyzed to determine the importance of each topic from the point of view of both usage and error. The findings are too extensive to be reported here in full, but a brief summary will be given. The reader is referred to the study itself for full details.

Fundamental Elements of Functional Grammar

1. The Sentence. The distinction between simple, complex, and compound sentences is important. The distinction of declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences is far less important.

2. Clauses. Adverbial, adjectival, and substantive clauses are of about equal importance on the basis of usage. The distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses deserves emphasis.

3. Prepositional Phrases. These phrases are important from the viewpoint of frequency, but of not much importance from the standpoint of error.

4. The Non-modal Verb Forms. Infinitives, participles, and gerunds are all important on the basis of both frequency and error.

5. Parts of Speech. Nouns, pronouns, and verbs are the forms most frequently used. All other parts of speech, except the interjection, also, occur frequently.

The declension of nouns should be simplified. Only the genitive case demands much emphasis, since the noun forms are the same in all other cases.

The declension of pronouns is important from the viewpoint of both usage and error. The agreement of pronouns with their antecedents should be emphasized.

Proper adjectives should be emphasized in the interest of correct capitalization. The comparison of irregular adjectives is an important topic. Some attention should be given to the proper use of the articles. Numerals as adjectives should be given slight attention.

Adverbs should receive minor emphasis. Irregular adverbs; as more and most, should receive some attention in connection with the comparison of adjectives.

Conjunctions require but little attention. They should be studied in connection with complex and compound sentences.

Verbs require an extended treatment, but labored emphasis on subjunctive forms is unnecessary. The subjunctive forms occur very infrequently. "Shall" and "will" are usually overemphasized. The present and past tense forms should receive the greater emphasis.

Rivlin listed the items of formal grammar found in several texts, and attempted to evaluate these items on the basis of their functional value.¹² Four experts in the teaching of English rated each item on a scale of "O" to "3." A list of these items was compiled with the functions of each item. The list is too long to be included in this discussion, but it should be familiar to every teacher of English. It was found that many items now receiving considerable attention in courses in grammar have little, or no, functional value. The study shows further that grammar is used very rarely in lessons in high school literature. Grammar is associated with composition much more than with literature. The incidental references to grammar in classes in literature were to a few grammati-

¹² Rivlin, Harry N., *Functional Grammar* Teachers College, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 435; Bureau of Publications, New York City, 1930.

cal principles; as the agreement of a verb with its subject.

From his examination of textbooks Rivlin concludes that present day texts stress functional grammar much more than did the texts of thirty years ago. However, it was found that no textbook was exclusively functional. Several items are included that have no functional value. It was found, also, that Associations of English teachers are practically unanimous in advocating functional grammar; although convincing proof is lacking that functional grammar will actually improve the pupil's ability to speak and write correctly.

Rhulen and Pressey made a statistical study of all the punctuation marks found in three types of material: letters, magazines, and newspapers.¹⁸ Only the body of each letter, every tenth page of each magazine, and the first page of each newspaper were considered. A grand total of 38,638 words of running material were examined. These words were distributed about equally among the different types of material. The frequency with which each mark occurred was tabulated. The figures are the average for the three types of material and indicate the number of occurrences for each 10,000 words of running material.

Periods occurred	535	times
Question marks	15	"
Exclamation points	3	"
<hr/>		
Full stops	553	times

¹⁸ Ruhlen, Helen, and Pressey, S. L., *A Statistical Study of Current Usage in Punctuation*; English Journal, 13:325-331, 1924.

Commas occurred	556	times
Semicolons	22	"
Colons	11	"
Dashes	21	"
Parentheses	7	"

Stops within sentences 617 times

Quotation marks occurred	44	times
Apostrophes	40	"

Special marks occurred 84 times

It will be observed that the burden of punctuation is carried by the period and the comma. These marks occur with approximately the same relative frequency in each type of material

The apostrophe is used to indicate the possessive case 28 times, and to indicate contractions, 11 times.

Quotation marks are used to set off direct conversation 18 times; and to attract attention to a word or phrase used ironically or technically, 15 times; to set off a quotation, 5 times; and to set off a title, 5 times. Not a single case was found of a quotation within a quotation.

The dash is used to set off a parenthetical expression, 15 times; and to set off a phrase at the end of a sentence, 2 times.

The semicolon is used 11 times to separate clauses of a compound sentence when the conjunction is omitted.

On the basis of this study the authors suggest the rules which constitute the minimum essentials of a course in punctuation; namely:

"Full stops: Use a question mark after a direct question (not after an indirect question). Use an exclamation

point after a sentence, exclamation, or interjection to show strong emotion or surprise. At the end of all other sentences use a period. Use a period also after abbreviations and initials.

"Pauses within a sentence: Use a comma (1) to set off slightly parenthetical phrases or clauses, (2) to set off introductory words, phrases, or clauses at the beginning of a sentence or obviously added elements at the end, (3) to separate words or phrases in a series, and (4) to separate clauses joined by 'and,' 'but,' 'for,' 'as,' or other simple conjunctions. The comma is also used (5) to separate the parts of a date or an address, (6) to introduce a short quotation, and (7) after the complimentary close of a letter.

"Use a semicolon (1) between clauses of a compound sentence that are not joined by a conjunction, and (2) to make prominent a division within a sentence when the parts separated are very long, or have commas within themselves.

"Use a colon (1) after words, phrases, or sentences serving as a formal introduction to something that follows; as a list or a long quotation. Use the colon also (2) after the salutation in a letter and (3) between the hours and minutes in a statement of time.

"Use a dash to indicate a marked break in the progress of thought in a sentence, as when an explanatory element is obviously inserted. The parenthesis may also be used for this last purpose.

"Special marks: Use the apostrophe (1) to indicate the omission of a letter or letters in a word and (2) to indicate the possessive case. However, possessive personal pronouns (its, his, theirs, yours, ours) do not take the apostrophe.

"Use quotation marks (1) to inclose a direct quotation (not an indirect quotation) and (2) to indicate the title of a theme, a short story, a magazine article, a poem, or play. However, italicize the names of books and magazines (italics is indicated by underlining). Quotation marks may also be used to call attention to technical, foreign, or unusual words used with some special (as ironical or humorous) meaning."

These minimum essentials of punctuation may be taught as need arises early in the secondary school and the more unusual rules added later as they are needed.

SUMMARY

Formal grammar has but little transfer value either to other subjects or to correct usage. There has been a distinct trend away from formal grammar towards functional grammar. Functional grammar is that body of rules and principles which have direct application to usage. But the so-called functional grammar does not transfer automatically to correct usage. Even practical rules must be applied consciously until their application becomes habitual.

Specifying in detail just what parts of grammar are functional is the province of the specialist in English rather than the function of the educational psychologist. It would appear from the studies reviewed in this section that functional grammar centers in such topics; as sentences, clauses, phrases, parts of speech, declension of pronouns, proper use of adjectives and adverbs, verb forms, and the rules for punctuation and capitalization.

HOW SHOULD GRAMMAR BE TAUGHT?

What psychological principles apply to the teaching of grammar? Learning grammar is primarily a process of formulating definitions and rules. The pupil must acquire an understanding of technical terms and of the rules and principles of language structure. To learn grammar is to *formulate, not memorize*, definitions and rules, and principles of language structure. How are these general notions formed in the mind of the pupil? Apparently, teachers have believed that a pupil could get a general notion by memorizing a formal definition or other generalization. A popular text of some fifty years ago introduces a study of the noun with a series of seven definitions. First, there is the definition of a noun: "A noun is a name." This dogmatic assertion is followed by definitions of common and proper nouns. Then follow definitions of the four different kinds of common nouns. Each definition is "illuminated" by one or two illustrations. These seven definitions with their meager illustrations are crowded into the space of about one half page. Obviously, the author believed that the pupil could acquire these general notions by memorizing the definitions and observing the examples given in each case, for, at the bottom of the same page, he gave a list of sentences with the direction: "Point out the nouns in these sentences."

This method of beginning with definitions and meager illustrations is commonly called the *deductive* method, but the procedure is not deductive in the strict logical sense. To use deduction in this sense is an abuse of a technical term. However, the method is just the reverse of sound psychological procedure. By this procedure the author

has condensed into one short lesson a unit of study that should cover a period of two or three weeks. But this short cut does not really facilitate the learning process. The pupils memorized the definitions; but they did not understand them, and, of course, could not apply them. Many pupils could not distinguish between a common noun and a proper noun; nor could they tell whether a certain word in a sentence was a noun or a non-noun. Frequently, a slow pupil would point to "the" and say, "The is a noun." Confusion reigned supreme in the minds of practically all the pupils, and continued indefinitely in the minds of most of them. The brighter pupils gradually built up the required concepts through their contacts with concrete material in the exercises of parsing and diagramming, but the minds of the less competent remained in permanent state of hopeless confusion. This group never learned much grammar; but they did learn to dislike the subject, and they acquired the firm belief that grammar is a difficult subject which they could never master. But the difficulty which many pupils encounter in grammar is due largely to the method of procedure and not to the complexity of the subject matter. The so-called deductive method is exactly the reverse of what the procedure should be, requiring the pupils to proceed in reverse gear. When the aim is to build up a general notion, the procedure should be *inductive*; that is, the pupil should be lead to formulate a definition or principle from his own observation and comparison of concrete materials. For example, the pupil should formulate his own definition of a noun by observing and comparing words functioning as nouns.

What, then, is the proper procedure in teaching rules and definitions? Generalizations are formed by observing

and comparing concrete materials. To develop the concept of a noun the pupil must observe and compare nouns until he can formulate a working definition. When a pupil can define a term on the basis of his own experience he is beginning to understand. A further test is the ability to apply the idea. It will be observed that the main processes in the inductive procedure are: observation of concrete materials, comparison, generalization, and application. To illustrate this method a unit of work on the noun is suggested.

The Noun

Objectives: To develop a concept of the noun, and to learn to distinguish between common and proper nouns.

Lesson One

Aim: To learn to recognize nouns:

You have been studying sentences, and have learned about words that are used as the subject or predicate of a sentence. Now you are to learn to recognize and name these words. Observe and compare the *underscored* words in the following sentences. How are these words alike? Try to express this likeness in a general statement.

1. The *Pilgrims* landed on *Plymouth Rock*.
2. The *man* rowed across the *river*.
3. *Mary* is reading a *book*.
4. *John* is studying his *lesson*.
5. The *birds* sang sweetly.
6. I saw *James* on the *street*.
7. *Thomas* lost his *knife*.

8. *Frank* threw the *ball* to second *base*.
9. We saw a *fire* on the other *side* of the *river*.
10. *Mary* was at the *game* last *Sunday*.
11. *William* has a spotted *pony*.
12. The *teacher* gave the *class* an *examination* in *algebra*.
13. *Jack* is the tallest *boy* in the *room*.
14. *New York* is the largest *city* in the *United States*.
15. A *group* of *words* expressing a complete *idea* is called a *sentence*.
16. The *family* went to the *woods* for a *picnic*.
17. *Mary Brown* teaches our *school*.
18. The *boys* are going to *camp*.
19. *Susan* has a new *dress*.
20. *Henry* lives on a *farm* in *Ohio*.

By observation and comparison the pupil should be able to discover that all the underscored words are names. They should express this idea in the form of a generalization or definition. These words are called *nouns*. What is a noun? Define the term, *noun*. If the pupil is not able at this point to formulate a satisfactory definition, the same type of work should be continued until he does reach the stage of generalization. Then the concept should be refined by pointing out the nouns in a list of sentences, or in connected discourse. Lesson One may need to be extended over several class periods.

Lesson Two

This is a lesson in applying the concept built up in Lesson One. It is, also, a test of the efficiency of instruction in Lesson One.

Point out the nouns in these sentences.

1. The garment is made of silk from Japan.
2. A circus is coming to town next Monday.
3. Fish are plentiful in the lake this season.
4. John plays on the baseball team.
5. Mary is an excellent student in Geometry.
6. Marion plays tennis.
7. Two boats were sailing on the lake.
8. A noun is a name of a person, place, or object.
9. "Treasure Island" was written by Stevenson.
10. A concrete bridge spans the river.
11. Anne was the winner of the guessing contest.
12. Albert walks three miles to school.
13. The postman came at the usual hour.
14. The little dog barked at the moon.
15. Usually, the teacher is cross on Monday.

When the pupils are successful in pointing out nouns in these and other sentences, they are ready to proceed with the next step in the development of their knowledge of the noun. If they have difficulty in recognizing nouns, they should be given more work of the type in Lesson One. Having learned to recognize nouns, the pupils are ready for the next step; namely, to learn to distinguish between common and proper nouns. This distinction the pupil must learn to make, since only proper nouns are capitalized.

Lesson Three

Aim: To learn the difference between common nouns and proper nouns.

In the following sentences divide the nouns into two classes: (1) nouns that are common to each individual of a group or class of objects; and (2) nouns that refer to particular persons, places, or objects.

1. Agnes is in the eighth grade.
2. The train arrives at Baltimore at 8:15.
3. The family had assembled in the home to celebrate Christmas.
4. Armistice Day is a holiday in the United States.
5. Rose Marie has two sisters and one brother.
6. Chicago and Philadelphia are both large cities.
7. Carlo is a useful dog; he brings the cows for the farmer.
8. Ichabod Crane was frightened by the headless horseman.
9. A winding road leads across the hill to the city.
10. James and John marched in the parade.
11. Grace washes the dishes for her mother.
12. Frank and his sister are coming to visit in our home.
13. Martin Smith lives in New Mexico.
14. Henry Blake is president of his class in high school.
15. Robert will graduate from college in June.
16. Horace Mann was at one time president of Antioch college.
17. Harvard is the oldest college in the United States.
18. *The Raven* was written by Edgar Allen Poe.
19. The book on the table belongs to Elizabeth.
20. *The Atlantic Monthly* is a first class magazine.

Nouns of the first class are called common nouns; nouns of the second class, proper nouns. Formulate a definition of this class. Note that proper nouns are written with capitals. If the pupils are unable to formulate satisfactory definitions, give them more practice in selecting and classifying the two types of nouns. If the definitions are satisfactory, give them practice in pointing out common and proper nouns in additional lists of sentences or in connected discourse.

It is probable that more than three class periods will be required to teach these three lessons. The teacher should take as much time as is necessary to develop the concept of the noun, and the concepts of common and proper nouns. Haste leads but to confusion and, in the end, to loss of time.

Similarly, the properties of the noun (gender, person, and number) may be developed. Some knowledge of these properties are necessary to an understanding of some of the fundamental rules of language structure; e. g., verbs must agree with their subjects in person and number.

A similar unit of work may be planned for each of the other parts of speech. Likewise, all the rules of language structure should be developed by the same process of induction. To illustrate this procedure further, units will be presented for capitalization and punctuation.

Capitalization

How can economic methods of learning be applied to the teaching of capitalization? Some instructive studies have been made in this field. A few of these will be reviewed briefly in the following pages.

Guiler made a study to determine the ability of high school graduates to capitalize correctly and to determine the prevalence of specific errors.¹⁴ The Guiler-Henry Diagnostic Test in Capitalization was administered to 649 college freshmen, the first week of school. This test covers 30 points or rules of capitalization; namely capitalize:

1. Whereas and resolved and the first word following each in formal resolutions.
2. Abstract words when strongly personified.
3. All important words in the designation of notable historical periods.
4. All important words in the designation of notable historical events.
5. All important words in the designation of notable historic movements.
6. All names for the Bible and other sacred books.
7. The names of holidays and days of special observance.
8. The letter O when used with nouns in direct address.
9. Words derived from the names of groups of persons and organizations.
10. Degrees and abbreviated titles following a name.
11. The first word and all important words in a title.
12. The names of groups of persons and organizations.
13. The abbreviations A. D. and B. C.
14. Words derived from the names of particular places and things.
15. Words derived from the names of persons.

¹⁴ Guiler, Walter Scribner, *Analysis of Capitalization Errors*; *English Journal*, 20:1-26, 1931.

16. The first word of the complimentary close of a letter.
 19. The first word of every line of poetry.
 18. The names of the days of the week.
 19. The pronoun I.
 20. Titles preceding a name.
 21. The names of the months of the year.
 22. The names of particular places and things.
 23. The first word of a sentence.
 24. All names referring to Deity.
 25. The names of persons.
 26. The first word of a direct quotation which is a complete sentence.
 27. The first word of the salutation of a letter.
- Do not capitalize:
28. The first word of the second part of a direct quotation unless the first word begins a new sentence.
 29. The first word of a direct quotation which is not a complete sentence.
 30. Words in indirect discourse except the first word of a sentence.

These rules are arranged in the order of their difficulty as shown by the results of the test. The rule most frequently violated is placed first.

The grade standards for the Guiler-Henry test are:

Grade	Standard
12	108
11	104
10	100
9	95

8	95
7	88

The median score of the 649 college freshmen was 105.6; the mean, 103.7, which is approximately the eleventh grade level of ability. A considerable number of these freshmen manifested a notable lack of mastery of the rules of capitalization. The range was wide: 36.5% attained twelfth grade standard, while 4.6% fell below seventh grade ability.

A few types of errors accounted for most of the mistakes made by the students. Error hazards were found to be greatest for rules 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. One-fourth of all the errors made were in 1 and 4; one-third, in 1, 2, and 4; one-half, in 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7; two-thirds, in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 28, 11, and 23; and three-fourths, in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 28, 11, 12, 13, and 23.

Guiler made a similar study of 34 sixth grade pupils. The Guiler-Henry Preliminary Diagnostic Test in Capitalization was administered at the beginning of the study.¹⁵ This test covers 30 specific uses of capitals, each of which is used two or more times. A diagnostic table was constructed to show the successes and failures of each pupil on each rule. Then remedial instruction was planned to meet the needs of each pupil. Group instruction was given on the items giving difficulty to a majority of the pupils. Also, individual instruction was organized to meet the needs of the individual pupil. A Student's Workbook in Capitalization by Guiler and Henry provided practice exercises. The remedial instruction continued for 14 weeks, 15 minutes daily. At the end of this period, prog-

¹⁵ Guiler, Walter Scribner, *Improving Ability in Capitalization*; Elementary School Journal, 31:216-222, 1930.

ress was measured by a retest, using the Guiler-Henry Retest in Capitalization.

Marked improvement was made by the 19 pupils given the remedial instruction and taking both tests. Their average score increased from 69 to 106, or from sixth grade standard to eleventh grade standard.

Certain uses of capitals proved to be much more difficult to learn than others. The seven rules proving most difficult for this group were: capitalize—

1. Abstract words strongly personified.
2. Names of notable historical events.
3. Names of notable historical movements.
4. First and all important words in a title.
5. Names of all sacred books.
6. Names of days of special observance.
7. Not to capitalize the first word of a direct quotation which is not a complete sentence.

In teaching capitalization special emphasis should be placed upon the rules that prove most difficult for pupils to master. However, a rule may be difficult for one pupil and comparatively easy for another. Consequently, teaching must be individualized. The 34 pupils participating in Guiler's experiment varied greatly not only in their mastery of the general field but also in their mastery of specific rules.

Similar methods were used by Guiler in another study of 153 college freshmen falling below 105 on the Guiler-Henry Diagnostic Test in Capitalization.¹⁶ The pupils were informed of their individual shortcomings. To this

¹⁶ Guiler, Walter Scribner, *Remediation of College Freshmen in Capitalization*; Educational Method, 11:540-544, 1932

end they were lead to analyze their own test papers making note of their own errors. Then, for several weeks, teaching and practice were directed to the points of individual difficulty. A student's workbook provided practice material. In brief a plan of diagnostic and remedial teaching was instituted. At the end of the experiment the pupils were retested with the Guiler-Henry Retest in Capitalization.

Noteworthy results were obtained. The students varied greatly in the amount of improvement; but, on the basis of average scores, the gain was from 97.3 to 123.6, or from approximately ninth grade standard to well above the twelfth grade standard. In other words, these students improved in the ability to capitalize from first year high school level to the college level as the result of a few weeks of training.

Pressey and Campbell made a study to determine the causes of children's errors in capitalization.¹⁷ Two ninth grade classes participated in the study. The pupils were asked to write compositions. As soon as these compositions had been read and corrected, the pupils were interviewed to determine the causes of their errors. It was found that the pupils had logical reasons for most of their errors. For example, one pupil capitalized "island" when used by itself in her paper on "Treasure Island." Another pupil, writing about happenings in some school, capitalized "school" because he thought of the events as happening in his school. Others capitalized certain words for emphasis. There were many cases of capitalizing common nouns in the body of a paper when these words appeared in the title; e. g., "song" when writing

¹⁷ Pressey, S. L., and Campbell, Vera, *The Causes of Children's Errors in Capitalization*, *English Journal*, 22:197-201, 1933.

about "The Arrow and the Song." An examination of the various types of errors led to the following conclusions:

1. In most cases the pupil had a reason for his errors; they were not mere chance occurrences.
2. Twenty-four per cent of the errors occurred in connection with the titles of themes.
3. Twenty per cent resulted from the use of common nouns as proper nouns.
4. Twenty-seven per cent were due to a defective sentence sense. The pupils failed to perceive clearly the beginning of a new sentence.
5. Eleven per cent were failures to capitalize the first word of a line of poetry.

Obviously, a knowledge of the causes of errors would be a distinct aid to the teacher in planning remedial work. With the pupils participating in this experiment more emphasis should be placed on the rules relating to the titles of themes, the distinction between common and proper nouns, sentence structure, and the lines of poetry.

Goodman made a study to determine the growth of ability to capitalize and punctuate correctly.¹⁸ The Leonard Diagnostic Test in Punctuation and Capitalization was administered to 2055 pupils in grades five to eleven. The data were analyzed to determine the decrease in errors from grade to grade and the persistency of particular errors noted. The results indicate that:

1. The ability to capitalize correctly increased considerably from grade to grade.

¹⁸ Goodman, J. H., *Punctuation and Capitalization Abilities*; Journal of Educational Research, 28:195-202, 1934.

2. The two rules of capitalization most nearly mastered by the middle of grade eleven are:
 - (1) Capitalize the first word of every sentence, and
 - (2) Capitalize the pronoun I.
3. The three "demon" rules of capitalization are:
 - (1) Capitalize the first word of a quotation;
 - (2) Capitalize each proper adjective;
 - (3) Capitalize each proper noun.
4. Errors in capitalization decreased only 43.3% from grade five to grade eleven.

This study suggests that more emphasis should be placed upon the teaching of the rules of punctuation and capitalization. More than half of the errors made in the fifth grade persisted through the eleventh. Also, the study shows what rules these pupils were mastering fairly well as well as the rules in which mastery was sadly lacking. Such knowledge is indispensable to the teacher planning remedial work.

The foregoing studies are suggestive of economic methods of procedure in teaching capitalization and punctuation. Particularly, they reveal the importance of diagnostic and remedial teaching. This type of procedure provides for the fundamental factors of effective learning; as practice applied to the point of error, insight into what is to be learned, and individuation of drill exercises.

To be more specific; *what psychological principles apply to the teaching of capitalization?* First, it may well be noted that the principle of induction applies to the teaching of capitalization, as it does to the development of all concepts. The pupil cannot learn to capitalize his own material by the simple expedient of memorizing the rules of capitalization from a textbook or manual.

He must formulate the rules from his own observation of correct usage. Then should follow an abundance of practice in applying these rules in drill exercises and in his own composition. However, the high school pupil should know most of the rules of capitalization. Much time is wasted in the classroom in attempting to teach the pupils what they have learned in previous grades; and, at the same time, failing to teach them what they have not learned. Economy in learning requires that effort be directed at the point of error or failure in the pupil's knowledge and skill. The first step is therefore to take stock of the pupil's knowledge of and habits of capitalization. Discover what rules the pupil knows already and can apply in his own written material. Then proceed to teach him the rules he does not know. Motivation is another important principle to be applied in teaching capitalization. Stimulate the will to learn by revealing to the pupil his needs in the field of capitalization, and by setting up definite goals to be attained. In the high school the pupil should strive to master all the rules of capitalization. Check progress towards this goal and keep the pupil informed of his progress. A knowledge of success and failure is an important factor in economic learning.

To aid teachers in applying psychological principles to the teaching of capitalization the following outline is suggested:

1. Administer a diagnostic test in capitalization; for example, The Guiler-Henry Preliminary Diagnostic Test in Capitalization.
2. Tabulate the results to show the standing of each

pupil. The tabulation should reveal the successes and failures of each pupil.

3. Develop inductively the rules which the pupils do not know. Individualize this instruction to meet the needs of each pupil.

4. Provide an abundance of practice exercises to develop the habit of applying the rules. Workbooks, or other prepared materials, may be used to advantage for practice exercises.

5. Individualize both instruction and practice.

6. Test the pupils a second time with a standard test to measure progress. Reteach and provide further practice on the rules that have not been fully mastered. Continue to instruct and drill until mastery is complete.

7. Distribute practice according to the difficulty of the rules and the needs of the pupils. That is, give more time to rules that are difficult for the pupils to understand and apply, and less time to the ones that are easy to learn.

Apparently, many teachers assume that a knowledge of the rules will control automatically the application of these rules—an unwarranted assumption. Remember that ideas do not carry over into practice automatically; they must be carried over until their application becomes habitual. An abundance of practice is therefore essential to the effective teaching of capitalization. Drill exercises are helpful, but practice must extend to the pupil's own written work. Moreover, a desirable habit cannot be acquired by practicing the reaction a part of the time. "Allow no exceptions to occur" is a fundamental law of habit formation. Only a few rules should be under consideration at any one time. This plan will enable the

pupil to guard carefully against error in applying these rules.

Punctuation

What psychological principles apply to the teaching of punctuation? Practically the same principles that apply to capitalization. Rules must be learned by the inductive method, and made habitual by practice. However, an additional difficulty arises from a tendency of many present day writers to ignore some of the conventional rules of punctuation. Modern writers employ three styles of punctuation: close, open, and conservative. In close punctuation all the conventional rules are observed with meticulous care. Open punctuation omits many of the usual marks. As few marks are employed as is consistent with clear meaning. The conservative style pursues a middle course. A writer employing the conservative style is not over-conscientious; nor is he unduly reckless with his omissions. In general, there is a tendency for a modern writer to adopt either the open or conservative style of punctuation.

Since methods of punctuation are in a transitional stage, it is impossible to lay down a complete set of rules to be adhered to rigidly by all writers. Perhaps, the best guide is clearness of meaning. Use marks whenever necessary to make the meaning of the sentence clear. However, when marks are used the conventional rules should be observed. In other words, the individual cannot make his own rules and be understood by others. In commenting on the uses of the comma, Ward lays down the rule, "Never use a comma without a reason." Ward continues:

"Whatever differences of opinion there may be among

university professors, they all agree heartily with the following advice to undergraduates: Never use a comma without a definite reason. The student who sprinkles in commas by luck, for good measure, is an intolerable person. Whenever you are in doubt about using a comma, ask yourself what reason you have, what definite rule you can cite for it. If you cannot, name a definite reason, use no comma. An aimless comma is worse than an omitted one."¹⁹

The same rule may well be applied to other punctuation marks, and made to read: Never use a punctuation mark without a reason. "Punctuation is a matter of logical convention, based upon the grammatical relation of the parts of the sentence. The purpose is to assist the reader in interpreting the sentence."²⁰

An extreme instance of open punctuation is that of Timothy Dexter who found so many diverse systems in use that he ordered all punctuation marks omitted from the body of the text, and had five pages of nothing but punctuation marks printed at the end of his work. From these, he said, "The reader could pepper his dish as he chose." Even so, the reader could choose wisely only on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the conventional rules. Moreover, if a pupil is to use good judgment in punctuating his own written material, he must have a full and accurate knowledge of the conventional rules. The best plan, therefore, is to teach the conventional rules and provide an abundance of practice in their application. After a pupil has mastered the close style of

¹⁹ Ward, H. C., *Better Sentences*, Scott, Foresman and Company, p. 161, New York, 1933.

²⁰ Canby, H. S., et al., *English Composition in Theory and Practice*; The Macmillan Company, New York, 1933.

punctuation, he may safely use the open style. But the pupil should understand that he cannot make his own rules. Punctuation marks convey meaning to the reader because their uses are conventional.

Some studies have been made in the field of punctuation which suggest economic methods of procedure. A few of these studies will be reviewed in this connection.

Goodman's study reviewed in the previous section included punctuation as well as capitalization.²¹ Goodman found:

1. Ability to punctuate correctly increases from grade five to grade eleven.
2. The three punctuation rules most nearly mastered are:
 - (1) Periods at the end of declarative and imperative sentences.
 - (2) Commas to separate words, phrases, and clauses in a series.
 - (3) Commas to separate names, places, and dates.
3. Seven rules had a large percentage of error:
 - (1) Use a semicolon to separate items of a series when commas are used within them.
 - (2) Use the apostrophe to show the possessive of a noun.
 - (3) Enclose literary titles in quotation marks.
 - (4) Place a colon before a formal list.
 - (5) Place a comma before "such as" when used to interpret the principal thought or when used appositively or parenthetically.

²¹ Goodman, J. H., *Growth in Punctuation and Capitalization*; Journal of Educational Research, 28.195-202, 1934

(6) Use an apostrophe to indicate the omission of a letter in a contraction.

(7) When a subordinate clause precedes a main clause, follow the subordinate clause with a comma.

4. The average decrease in errors from grade five to grade eleven was 54.4%. So only a little more than half the errors made in the fifth grade were eliminated by the middle of the eleventh grade. Should not the school accomplish more in six years of work in English? It will be recalled that less than half of the errors in capitalization were eliminated in these grades.

This study indicates a need for more effective methods of teaching both capitalization and punctuation. More emphasis should be placed upon the rules having the larger percentage of errors.

Harriman investigated the chief sources of confusion in the use of punctuation marks.²² A test was administered to high school seniors to determine the type of mistakes made. Harriman found:

1. That the most common error was the haphazard use of the comma.

2. That the semicolon is a source of much confusion.

3. When a semicolon was needed before a conjunctive adverb, 61% of these seniors used a comma.

This study indicates that more emphasis should be placed on teaching the rules relating to the uses of the comma and the semicolon. Doubtless, the confusion found in this study in the uses of the comma and the

²² Harriman, Philip L, *Sources of Confusion in Punctuation and Capitalization*; Peabody Journal of Education, 12:31-35, 1934.

semicolon was due to ineffective methods in teaching the rules governing the uses of these marks.

Ashbaugh analyzed 1500 letters, written by junior and senior high school pupils outside of school to determine the number and types of errors made by these pupils.²⁸ Many errors in punctuation were found.

The comma was omitted in parenthetical words, phrases, and clauses in 87% of the occasions in Grade VII, in 68% in Grade IX, and in 71% in Grade XII. The comma in headings, addresses, etc. was omitted in 58% of the occasions in Grade VII, in 51% in Grade IX, and in 45% in Grade XII.

The apostrophe of possession was omitted in 63% of the occasions in Grade VII, in 50% in Grade IX, and in 37% in Grade XII.

The question mark was omitted in 34% of the cases in Grade VII, in 30% in Grade IX, and in 26% in Grade XII.

The comma in a series was omitted in 22% of the cases in Grade VII, in 19% in Grade IX, and in 11% in Grade XII.

The period was omitted at the end of a declarative sentence in 23% of the cases in Grade VII, in 15% in Grade IX, and in 16% in Grade XII.

These data indicate that the high school is failing to teach punctuation very effectively. In each grade the percentage of error in the use of the comma is high, and the gain from grade to grade is small. The same is true of the apostrophe, the question mark, and to some extent of the period. The gain from Grade IX to Grade XII is less than the gain from Grade VII to Grade IX.

²⁸ Ashbaugh, E. J., *Non-School English of High School Students*; *Journal of Educational Research*, 15:307-313, 1927.

The teaching in the junior high school appears to be a little more effective than the teaching in the senior high school.

Bobbitt analyzed a random sampling of 362 letters sent to the "Voice of the People" in *The Chicago Daily Tribune*.²⁴ The aim was to determine the types of errors made in written English. A total of 7,110 errors occurred in these letters. There was an average of one error for every fourteen words. Errors in Punctuation head the list, numbering 2,796. The ten errors in punctuation occurring most frequently were:

1. Commas incorrectly omitted with non-restrictive or parenthetical modifiers.
2. Incorrect punctuation of an abbreviation.
3. Failure to use period to dissociate independent statements.
4. Superfluous punctuation.
5. Failure to dissociate properly the independent clauses in a long compound sentence.
6. Words in a series not properly separated by commas.
7. Commas not used to set off appositives.
8. Commas omitted when restrictive modifiers come between other closely related groups of words.
9. Failure to use a question mark after an interrogative sentence.
10. Omission of quotation marks with a direct quotation.

²⁴ Bobbitt, Sarah A., *Shortcomings in the Written English of Adults*; Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 31; University of Chicago, 1926.

Obviously, more attention should be given to the uses of the comma, the period, and the question mark.

The foregoing studies reveal an urgent need for more effective teaching of the rules of punctuation. Also, these studies indicate a need for more diagnostic and remedial teaching. By way of applying this idea the following plan is suggested:

1. Administer a diagnostic test in punctuation.
2. List and classify the errors of each pupil.
3. Develop inductively the rules which the pupils fail to apply correctly. The rules should be formulated by the pupil from his own observations of correct usages, not memorized from a textbook.
4. Provide practice exercises to develop the habit of applying the rules. The practice on any rule should extend over several days in order that its use may become habitual. Workbooks may be used to advantage for practice exercises.
5. Individualize both instruction and practice.
6. Practice with definite aims in view. Concentrate attention on one rule, or one mark, at a time. Continue practice long enough to bring about noticeable improvement.
7. Check the results frequently and keep the pupil informed of his progress. Give definite scores on the daily drill exercises; also, give objective tests frequently.
8. Distribute practice according to the difficulty of the rules and the frequency of errors.
9. After an extended period of study and practice administer a second diagnostic test. Reteach the rules that have not been thoroughly mastered.

There is no magic in this plan; but it will be effective if properly applied, because it makes provision for the factors that make for rapid learning. Pupils can and will learn punctuation when the processes of diagnostic and remedial teaching are skillfully applied.

SUMMARY

Grammar has but little transfer value of any kind; teach therefore only functional grammar. A knowledge of grammar does not transfer automatically to usage. Ideas do not carry over into habit; they must be applied consciously until their use becomes habitual.

The concepts, rules, and principles of grammar should be developed inductively. The pupil should be led to formulate the definitions and rules on the basis of his own observation and comparison of concrete materials. Test his understanding through application.

Teach capitalization and punctuation through diagnostic and remedial teaching:

1. Stimulate the will to learn.
2. Administer a diagnostic test.
3. List and classify the errors of each pupil.
4. Teach the rules and concepts inductively.
5. Provide an abundance of practice in application.
6. Individualize both instruction and practice.
7. Practice with definite aims.
8. Distribute practice on the basis of difficulty.
9. Check results frequently.
10. Retest and reteach the points that have not been learned thoroughly.

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CHAPTER V

READING

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

Reading has long been held in high esteem. Francis Bacon wisely observed that, "Reading maketh a full man." Reading is the most effective means of extending experience beyond the limited confines of personal contacts. The ability to read well is one mark of an educated man. Inability to read marks one as "illiterate." By common consent reading is given the first place among all the school subjects. In the traditional school, promotion depends largely on the ability to read. The importance attached to reading by the layman is justified by the research work of the experts in the field.

In Searson's investigation, summarized in Chapter I, reading is ranked along with penmanship and spelling as an indispensable skill in all vocations.¹ Through reading the housewife may learn to prepare more palatable and more enticing dishes; the doctor may improve his diagnosis and treatment of patients; the lawyer may learn how cases have been decided; the farmer may learn how to combat plant diseases; and the teacher may learn how to guide more effectively the personality development of her pupils.

As early as 1917, the National Committee on the

¹ Searson, J. W., *Determining A Language Program*; English Journal, 13:99-114, 1924.

Reorganization of English in the Secondary Schools gave strong emphasis to the importance of reading in the program of secondary English. This committee urged that skill be developed in three types of reading:

1. Cursory reading to cover a great deal of ground, getting quickly at essentials
2. Careful reading to master an article or book.
3. Consultation to trace quickly and accurately a particular fact by means of indexes, guides, and reference books.²

In Goode's study, reading was given a prominent place in both city and state courses of study.³ Reading with comprehension and improving one's taste were frequently recurring aims. In a similar study by Starbird, Williams, and Hatfield, reading ranked next to conversation as the most frequently used type of English Expression.⁴

The foregoing studies, as well as several not cited here, emphasize the importance of reading in the secondary schools, and tend to confirm the common opinion that reading is the most important subject in the school curriculum.

Moreover, success in other subjects depends to a considerable extent upon the ability to read rapidly and with clear comprehension. As schools are ordinarily conducted, reading is the chief source of information and the most common method of study in nearly all the school subjects;

² Hoosic, James L., *Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools*; Bulletin, 17; Department of Interior, Washington, D. C., 1917

³ Goode, Carter V., *English Objectives and Constants in Secondary Schools*, Peabody Journal of Education, 5:230-235, 1928.

⁴ Starbird, Myrtle, Williams, R. C., and Hatfield, W. W., *Out-of-School Uses of English*, English Journal, 22:466-471, 1933.

and in every subject reading is an important tool. The pupil can solve any mathematical problem that he can read. The good silent reader can prepare his lesson in the social studies with a minimum of time and energy. The appreciation of literature is attained more readily by the pupil who can read rapidly and with good comprehension. On the other hand, it is practically impossible for a pupil whose reading ability is on the sixth grade level to appreciate a difficult play like Macbeth.

Finck found that pupils trained in silent reading for 105 days one half hour a day gained 1.85 times as much in scholastic achievement as a group equal in ability with no special training in reading.⁵ Robinson found that a group of pupils in the lowest tenth in reading ability and scholarship made marked improvement in both functions with diagnosis and treatment of their reading difficulties.⁶ According to Book, good readers earn more credits than poor readers. With instruction in reading college students made marked improvement, gaining 37.3% in efficiency.⁷

Smith's study of the relationship between reading ability and scholastic standing revealed a close correspondence between reading scores and school marks.⁸ Pupils making 85%, or better, in all their subjects made by far the higher scores in reading. Apparently, the ability to read directly influences school marks. Probably, both functions depend upon a common factor; as intelligence.

⁵ Finck, Edgar M., *Relation of Ability in Reading to Success in Other Subjects*; Elementary School Journal, 36:260-267, 1935.

⁶ Robinson, F. P., *Can College Freshmen in the Lowest Tenth in Reading Ability be Aided Scholastically?* School and Society, 34:843-846, 1931.

⁷ Book, W. F., *How Well College Students Can Read*; School and Society, 26:242-248, 1927.

⁸ Smith, Bertha, *Efficiency in Silent Reading*, School Review, 25:637-645, 1917.

As a rule, pupils making high scholastic marks make also high scores in reading.

Dickinson made a similar study, using as subjects 149 pupils in Grade IX.⁹ Reading ability was measured with standard tests; scholastic achievement, by teachers' marks. The correlations between the two sets of scores ranged from .233 to .743. There appears to be a positive correlation between reading ability and school achievement, but the correlation is only moderate.

Flemming analyzed the problems listed by 230 teachers engaged in secondary school work.¹⁰ More than half of these teachers emphasized deficiency in reading as a factor retarding learning in the high school. Both poor comprehension and slow rate are stressed by these teachers as retarding factors. Pupils, these teachers say, need training in different types of reading: skimming, summarizing, and outlining. Pupils need training, also, in the use of books and other reference materials.

Shuchowsky and Flemming modified the usual English program to make room for remedial work in reading.¹¹ The remedial program extended throughout one semester. The experimental group gained 1.7 school years in reading ability, while a control group gained only .4 year. But what is more to the point here, the training of the experimental group spread to the regular work in English. The pupils developed more interest in writing and read with more eagerness.

⁹ Dickinson, Charles E., *A Study of the Relation of Reading Ability to Scholastic Achievement*, School Review, 33:616-626, 1925.

¹⁰ Flemming, Cecile White, and Woodring, Maxie N., *Problems in Directing the Study of High School Pupils*; Teachers College Record, 29: 318-333, 1925.

Shuchowsky, Ruth, and Flemming, Cecile White, *The English Teacher Makes Room for Remedial Reading*; English Journal, 24:122-125, 1935.

These studies all point to the same general conclusion; namely, a pupil deficient in reading ability is usually deficient in achievement in other subjects. There is some evidence, by no means conclusive, that improvement in reading ability is accompanied by noticeable improvement in other school subjects. In other words, there appears to be considerable correlation between reading ability and scholastic achievement.

The Reading Ability of High School Pupils

Popular opinion decrees that the child should learn to read in the first six grades; and thereafter he should read to learn. Doubtless, the basic reading habits can be established in the elementary school, but the idea that the process of learning to read can be carried to completion so early in life is an erroneous notion. Learning to read is to a considerable extent a process of enriching one's experience. Kerfoot, in his excellent book, "How to Read," relates an experience which will serve to clarify this point.¹² At a social function the question was asked, "When did you learn to read?" This question provoked a variety of responses. One had learned to read before he could remember; another, in the first grade; and still another, at five years of age. The replies were categorical answers to a technical question which Kerfoot says he found himself vaguely resenting. He remarks further:

"There was a cumulative inflection of finality in their declarations. It almost sounded as though, in dealing with the primary-school meaning of 'learning to read,' they felt that they had dealt with the whole meaning of

¹² Kerfoot, J. B., *How To Read*, p. 2-3; Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1916.

that expression. And while it never entered my head at the moment that this was really true, the fact that it was somehow being made to appear true struck me as amusing. It struck me as amusing enough to call attention to. And so, presently, when the host asked me when I had learned to read, I answered with a smile that I was still learning."

To some this may be a new point of view; nevertheless the view is sound psychologically. Reading is a process of experiencing. An individual is still learning to read as long as he is enriching his experience. Therefore, reading ability should be markedly increased in the high school period. In this period the pupil's experience is greatly broadened and enriched. Surely, *he is still learning to read.*

How Well Can High School Pupils Read?

Practically every pupil entering high school has some reading ability, but many pupils may not be able to read well enough to meet the demands of high school teachers. Frequently, teachers complain that their pupils can't read, but as Baker has well said, "Probable every pupil in high school today can read, but as any reading measurement of a class will show, there is a wide variation of reading ability in even one class. There are probably more pupils in high school classes who do not meet the teachers' hopes than those who do, as far as reading ability is concerned."¹⁸ A part of the difficulty grows out of the fact that many teachers expect too much of the pupil below average in mental ability. On the other hand, lack of

¹⁸ Baker, Harold, V., *Pupils Can Read*; The High School Journal, 21: 153-157, '1938.

training may play an important part. Perhaps, the high school is failing to develop the potential reading ability of its pupils.

Jordan made a study of the ability of high school pupils to interpret and evaluate editorials of contemporary interest.¹⁴ The pupils were asked to read two short editorials in the Boston *Herald* and answer three questions:

1. What is the subject of the editorial?
2. What conclusions are reached?
3. What reasons are given for the conclusions?

The pupils were told to reread the article, if necessary. On the first editorial the average percentage of correct responses was: freshmen 26; sophomores 42.3; juniors 44.3; and seniors 49.3. Similar results were obtained with the second editorial. Although these editorials were fairly easy, the percentage of correct responses is low for all classes. Nine schools participated in this experiment. The results indicate a low level of reading ability in these schools, particularly of the type of ability required in reading editorials. There is some progress, however, from the freshmen to the senior year.

Lyman tested the ability of high school seniors to distinguish between sound and unsound reasoning, which is one phase of reading ability.¹⁵ The 309 pupils participating in this experiment were given a list of paragraphs containing sound and unsound reasoning. They were asked to indicate in each paragraph whether the reasoning

¹⁴ Jordan, R. H., *A Threefold Experiment in High School English*; *English Journal*, 10:560-569, 1921.

¹⁵ Lyman, R. L., *How High School Pupils Explain Common Errors in Reasoning*; *English Journal*, 12:293-305, 1925.

was sound or unsound. In addition, they were asked to give the reason for marking an argument sound or unsound. It was found that 25% of these seniors were able to distinguish between sound and unsound reasoning, and to give excellent explanations of their choices. Nearly 40% failed in giving satisfactory explanations of their choices. About 12% made wrong choices, and 26% gave totally inadequate explanations. On the whole this is a poor showing for a group of high school seniors.

Doubtless, the ability to distinguish between sound and unsound reasoning is to a considerable extent a function of intelligence, but it is probable that this ability can be greatly improved by training. Certainly, it should not be limited to the upper fourth as it was with the pupils participating in this study. Should not three-fourths of the pupils instead of one-fourth be able to distinguish between sound and unsound reasoning in easy paragraphs? Perhaps, training in this type of reading would accomplish this result.

A more recent and more extensive study in the field of reading ability is that of Center and Persons who made a survey of the reading ability of the pupils in the Theodore Roosevelt High School in New York City.¹⁶ Standardized silent reading tests were administered to the entire school, numbering 7,174 pupils. Similar tests were administered to the entering pupils from 1934 to 1936. In summarizing their results these investigators say:

"The studies in reading ability in Theodore Roosevelt High School, a large coeducational cosmopolitan high school, reveal that 64 per cent of the first-term entrants

¹⁶ Center, Stella S., and Persons, Gladys L., *Teaching High School Students To Read*, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1937.

of terms beginning with 1934 and ending with 1936, have been seriously deficient in reading skill. Considerable numbers of these pupils read on the fourth,—fifth,—sixth,—and seventh grade elementary school levels. According to the Terman Group Test of Mental Ability about 24 per cent of the pupils have IQ's of 89 and below. Retardation in reading was not confined to the pupils of low mental ability. Studies of entrants from junior high schools reveal 50 per cent reading below the tenth grade level and about 35 per cent at and below eighth-grade level. About 27 per cent of this group have IQ's of 89 and below. A survey of the entire school of 7,174 students in June 1935, revealed large percentages of pupils in each grade reading below the accepted norm for the grade, 38 per cent of the graduating class were below standard."

A comparison of the scores on reading tests and on intelligence tests reveals more retardation in reading than in intelligence. For example, 81 % of the entering pupils are retarded one year or more in reading ability; whereas only about 50 % are below the median in mental ability. On the other hand, only about 35.4 % were at or above ninth grade level in reading ability; whereas nearly 50 % were above 100 IQ in mental ability. The range in reading ability was from third grade to tenth and above.

These and other studies indicate that the reading ability of many high school pupils is one or more years retarded. A few drop as low as the third grade level; the range is from the third grade level to the college level. Evidently, there is an urgent need for instruction in reading at the high school level.

TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS TO READ

Can high school pupils be taught to read more effectively?

Mabel L. Ansley conducted a remedial program with 26 ninth grade pupils who were retarded two or more years in reading ability.¹⁷ Seventy-seven per cent of these pupils had intelligence quotients below 100. A control group was arranged approximately equal in ability. The Gate's Silent Reading Tests were administered to both groups at the beginning of the experiment. The control group continued with the regular work in English; while the experimental group was given remedial work for a period of eight weeks. The remedial work consisted of an extensive reading program and a more definite remedial procedure. At the end of the training period both groups were tested again with another form of the Gate's Silent Reading Tests. It was found that the control group had gained only 1.5 years; whereas the experimental group had gained 2.5 years in reading ability. The eight weeks training had contributed more than a year of growth in reading ability.

Pressey and Pressey found remedial training in reading effective with college freshmen.¹⁸ They employed as subjects 422 college freshmen testing in the lower fourth in reading ability. A control was arranged approximately equal in intelligence and in reading ability. The remedial program for the experimental group extended over a period of seven weeks. The students came to one class

¹⁷ Ansley, Mabel L., *Extensive Remedial Reading*, English Journal, 25:121-123, 1936

¹⁸ Pressey, L. C., and S. L., *Training College Freshmen to Read*; Journal of Educational Research, 21:203-211, 1930.

a week for instruction, and, in addition, had daily drill with Pressey's Reading Exercises for College Freshmen. The first check test was given at the end of four weeks. On the basis of this test, 115 students were excused from further practice. At the end of seven weeks a final test was administered to the remaining students. The median percentile score of the experimental group had increased from 14 to 41, an increase of 27 percentile points.

Further evidence of the value of remedial work is found in a comparison of the academic work of the two groups. A distribution of the marks for two quarters was tabulated for both groups and the point hour ratios computed. The experimental group had a point hour ratio of 1.61; the control group, a ratio of 1.41. The difference in favor of the experimental group is not large; but it is statistically reliable, the probable error of the difference being .045.

Anders studied the effect of a free reading program on reading ability.¹⁹ The pupils of two ninth grade classes composed the experimental groups. Control groups of approximately equal ability followed the regular course of study. The progress of both groups was measured with standard reading tests. The experimental groups were encouraged to read the type of books and magazines that they liked to read. The selections were read and questions answered on their content. The experiment continued from March 12, to May 23. In this time the reading age of the experimental group improved 2.4 years; while the control group improved only 1.1 years. One division of the control group improved only .5 year. Apparently, pupils read more and gain more in reading

¹⁹ Anders, Lenore Lear, *Remedial Effects of A Free Reading Program*; English Journal, 25:851-856, 1936.

ability when they are permitted to choose their own reading material than they do when they are required to read the traditional classics.

Farbish found drill with the McCall-Crabb Standard Test Lessons in Reading effective with a group of ninth grade pupils.²⁰ Five sections of the freshmen class participated in this experiment. The pupils were divided into an experimental group and a control group on the basis of reading age and chronological age. The experimental group was drilled in reading exercises ten minutes a day, twice a week, from October to the end of the term. As a result, the experimental group gained in reading age from 158.3 months to 179.3 months; whereas the control group gained only from 158 to 162.6 months. In terms on grade score, the experimental group gained 2.1; the control group, only .2.

Peral Sands McCarty studied the effect of remedial work with a group of 38 ninth and tenth grade pupils in the West Virginia University High School, Morgantown, West Virginia.²¹ These pupils were below standard in reading ability as measured by standard tests. Two groups were formed on the basis of chronological age, intelligence quotient, and scores in reading. The control group followed the usual reading program; while the experimental group was given training in specific reading skills, one hour a day for twelve weeks. The skills receiving special emphasis were:

Getting the central thought of an entire article, story or paragraph;

²⁰ Farbish, Sidney A., *An Experiment in Remedial Reading*; English Journal, 22:585-587, 1933.

²¹ McCarty, Pearl Sands, *Increasing Comprehension in Silent Reading*; School Review, 39:758-766, 1931.

Finding descriptive words or phrases;
Finding expressive words or phrases;
Reading to answer thought questions;
Making summaries;
Understanding cartoons.
Skimming for general information.

Comprehension was checked daily with improvised tests. Progress was measured by the increase in scores on the Iowa Silent Reading Tests administered at the beginning and again at the close of the training period. The experimental group made a percentage gain of 44.3; the control group gained 30.5. These scores show a noticeable difference in favor of the experimental group. However, the difference in means is not statistically reliable, being only 1.4 times the probable error of the difference. The gains in comprehension were made without any loss in rate.

Center and Persons report the results of an extensive project in remedial reading in the Theodore Roosevelt High School, New York City.²² A survey of the reading abilities of the 7,714 pupils revealed a large percentage of retardation, as reported in a previous section. About 51% scored below their normal grade level on standard tests. Remedial instruction was organized for these retarded pupils. Most of the pupils chosen for this instruction had intelligence quotients of 89 and below. All were retarded at least one year in reading ability.

The remedial instruction was to a considerable extent individualized. Not more than five pupils was assigned to a special teacher at any one time. As far as possible, homogeneous groups were organized. Results are re-

²² Center, Stella S and Persons, Gladys L, *Teaching High School Students To Read*, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1937.

ported for more than 300 pupils who had from two to four terms of special instruction, and were present for the initial and final tests. Reading was the central feature of the remedial work. The pupils were taken from the regular reading classes and were given all their instruction in English in these special classes. The primary aim of the remedial work was to improve the reading ability of the pupils and return them to the regular English classes. The materials of instruction were organized in units. "These units or reading lessons were placed fresh and new in the hands of the pupils at the beginning of a lesson period. After brief oral motivation and whatever directions were deemed necessary, the pupils were instructed to read silently and to write answers to the comprehension and vocabulary exercises in their papers." Each unit was followed by a comprehension test, a vocabulary exercise, questions for oral discussion, and oral work on words. Progress was measured by gains on standard reading tests.

The results show gratifying gains for all groups. In terms of grade levels the average gain of all groups was 1.48. The range is from .9 to 1.8. The greatest gains were made in the first and second terms of remedial instruction; progress was slow thereafter. These gains are noteworthy with slow and retarded pupils. It will be recalled that the IQ's of these pupils were 89 and below.

Monroe and Backus found remedial reading effective at both the junior and senior high school levels.²⁸

On the basis of scores on the Metropolitan Reading test two groups of seventh grade pupils were selected for remedial instruction: one group numbering 26 and the

²⁸ Monroe, Marion, and Backus, Bertie, *Remedial Reading*; Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1937

other, 37. Also, 17 special cases were selected from the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. These special cases met with the counselors once a week, in groups of two to four. The two seventh grade groups were given their remedial work by the regular English teachers under the direction of the counselors. The seventh grade groups were given, also, a Word-Discrimination Test devised by the counselor, Jeanette Speiden, to discover errors in the discrimination of words; e. g., slip for slap or sheer for sheep. The errors of each pupil were classified and ranked. Then remedial methods were employed to aid the pupils in the elimination of their errors of this type. Also, workbooks in silent reading were employed to develop desirable silent reading skills. This remedial work was continued throughout the second semester. At the end of the year the pupils were tested a second time to measure progress.

On the basis of the test scores the group of 26 cases gained, on the average, 1.2 years in reading achievement; and the group of 37 cases gained 0.5 year. The special group of 17 cases gained 0.9 year. These gains are especially noteworthy when the intelligence of these pupils is taken into consideration. The median intelligence quotient of the group of 26 was only 86; of the group of 37, 92. The special cases, however, had a median intelligence quotient of 104.

A similar remedial project in another junior high school yielded about the same results. On the basis of tests of intelligence and of reading achievement 34 pupils retarded in reading ability were selected for remedial instruction in reading. A remedial program was instituted extending over a period of sixteen weeks. As a result the group made a median gain of 1.3 years in silent reading

ability. The median intelligence quotient of the group was only 87.

The authors conclude that remedial work in reading is effective at the junior high school level. After about a semester's training pupils who were below average in intelligence made median gains of 0.5 to 1.3 years in achievement in reading. However, achievement varied widely. A few pupils made little or no gain; whereas several gained more than two years. In addition, the authors point out that these gains were accompanied in many cases by greater interest in reading and by favorable changes in behavior.

Monroe and Backus report, also, the results of remedial work in reading on the high school level. The subjects of this experiment were 16 pupils of the Woodrow Wilson High School, Washington, District of Columbia. These pupils had failed in English and tested below seventh grade level on the Haggerty Reading Test, Sigma 3, Form A. The pupils met regularly for 47 minutes daily for 16 weeks. Ten to fifteen minutes each day were devoted to overcoming difficulties with vowels and consonants. The remainder of the period was devoted to improving oral and silent reading. Dictaphones were installed to motivate the oral reading and to aid each pupil in noting and correcting his own errors. McCall and Crabb's Standard Test Lessons in Reading and Hovious' Following Printed Trails were used for drill in comprehension.

As a result of the 16 weeks of remedial work in reading the pupils made a median gain of 2.0 years in reading achievement; and this gain was made by pupils whose median intelligence quotient was only 90.

Similar results were obtained in two vocational high

schools. In one of these schools, 28 pupils with a median intelligence quotient of 81, gained 0.5 year as a result of 14 weeks of remedial training. In the other school 24 pupils with a median intelligence quotient of 80, gained 0.8 year after 12 weeks of remedial training.

The conclusion is reached that remedial training in reading may be given successfully at the senior high school level. The chief difficulty encountered was the embarrassment of the pupils over their poor reading ability.

SUMMARY

The data of this section point to the conclusion that instruction in reading at the secondary school level is effective in improving reading ability, even with slow and retarded pupils. Nearly all the remedial programs resulted in marked improvement even with pupils below average in intelligence. However, it must be admitted that many of the experiments in remedial reading are lacking in scientific validity. Some failed to provide control groups; in others the difference in means is not large enough to be statistically reliable. Nevertheless, the results consistently support the conclusion that the remedial training in reading is effective at the secondary school level.

Teaching High School Pupils To Read More Effectively

Apparently, two general types of training in reading are needed in the high school: (1) Remedial training for pupils who test below grade level on standard tests, and (2) training for all pupils in reading different types

of material and for different purposes; as reading informational material and books of fiction.

The reading program in high school should provide for the diagnosis of the reading abilities of all entering pupils. Standard tests of the diagnostic type should be administered and tables and graphs made to show the errors and deficiencies in the reading ability of each pupil. Then remedial treatment should be given to aid each pupil in overcoming his own weaknesses. Training to be effective must be individualized. Each pupil should be guided in developing an insight into his own deficiencies and in practicing to overcome his difficulties. The details of this work belong in the field of method rather than to the field of psychology, but it may be well to remind the teacher of some psychological principles that should be applied in this procedure. Of course, the will to learn must be stimulated; and the pupil must gain an insight into his deficiencies. Also, the pupil must see clearly just what he needs to do to improve. His practice work should be guided by definite aims; that is, applied to the point of error. Checking devices should be used to keep the pupil informed of his progress. A thorough diagnosis with charts and graphs showing the standing of each pupil will provide for *insight* and stimulate the will to learn. Workbooks and practice exercises are available for drill. Similar exercises may be improvised to meet more definitely the needs of the pupils. The up-to-date teacher will be familiar with these materials and with the reports of remedial instruction in other schools. Two reports containing details of procedure in remedial reading are; Monroe and Backus: *Remedial Reading*; Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1937.

Center and Persons: *Teaching High School Students To*

Read; D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1937.

Additional material may be found in the references listed at the end of the chapter.

The Study Type of Reading. The first step in teaching the study type of reading is an analysis of the steps or processes involved. Since the publication of McMurry's "How To Study," in 1909, supervised or directed study has been a live topic in American education.²⁴ McMurry's book is an excellent treatise on the study type of reading, having a chapter on each important factor of the reading type of study. Several analyses of this type of reading have been made in recent years. There is considerable difference in the points of view and in the emphasis given to specific factors by the various authors, but there is general agreement on the main processes; namely,

1. Reading with specific aims or for specific purposes.
2. Selecting and organizing the important points in the material being read.
3. Evaluating or judging the worth of the ideas found in the material.
4. Memorizing or fixing in mind the important items. Logical memory is the proper type to use.
5. Using or applying the points to life situations.

The next step is to check the pupil's methods of reading in the light of these factors. To what extent does the pupil utilize these factors in this type of reading? Does he select and organize the main points in his reading assignments? Does he fix in mind the important items?

²⁴ McMurry, F. M., *How To Study and Teaching How To Study*; Houghton and Mifflin Company, New York, 1909.

Does he make use of the information he gathers from his reading? The teacher should help each pupil to analyze his own reading habits to discover to what extent he is already utilizing the important factors of the study type of reading. A chart similar to Figure 4 may be used for this purpose.

	<i>Diagnostic Reading Scores</i>					
	Aims	Organ.	Evalua.	Mem.	Applica.	Total
Max. Scores	10	30	20	20	20	100
Pupils						
A	5	15	10	15	10	55
B	10	25	10	15	10	70
C						

Figure 4. A Diagnostic Score Card for the Study Type of Reading.

Test the pupil's ability to do reading of the study type by assigning a short selection suitable for the purpose from a text or supplementary material. Improvise an objective test designed to test the pupil's ability to discover the author's aim, to select and organize the important points, to evaluate, and to apply these points. Assign a definite number of points to each factor as suggested in Figure 4. Tabulate the results showing each pupil's score on each factor. This tabulation should reveal the pupil's strong and weak points in this type of reading. For example. Pupil A, in the illustration is generally a poor reader and needs directed practice on all the important factors. Pupil B is a fairly good reader. His weakest points are evaluation and application. These

factors should be stressed in his training. Similarly, the reading ability of each member of the class may be diagnosed and the proper remedial measures applied.

A third step is to lead the pupil to set up these factors as standards to be attained in his own reading. The will to learn may be stimulated by practice exercises in which the pupils are given short selections to read followed immediately by objective tests on the material. Exercises of this type will provide practice and frequent checks on the pupil's progress. Exercises in outlining and summarizing will provide practice in selecting and organizing the main points in a selection. Because of the strong tendency on the part of the pupils to accept uncritically what they find in print, strong emphasis should be given to the factor of evaluation. However, it does not help the pupil much to tell him that he should judge the worth of what he reads. To be effective the training must develop methods of procedure and definite standards of evaluation ²⁵ Teach the pupil :

1. *To evaluate material in the light of the aim or purpose of the author.* A point is valuable to the extent that it contributes to the solution of the problem under consideration, or to the extent that it is related to the specific aim of the writer. Relevant points are valuable; irrelevant points are valueless. From this viewpoint, the worth of a point is measured by its *degree of relevancy* to the aim.

2. *To weigh relative values.* The proper organization of material requires the pupil to distinguish between the

²⁵ The paragraphs on evaluation are quoted substantially from Shreve's *Supervised Study Plan of Teaching*, Johnson Publishing Company, Richmond, Virginia, 1927.

main and minor points, between headings and subheadings. This distinction involves the weighing of relative values. Each point must be evaluated in the light of the aim and placed in a system of coordinate and subordinate points. To make a good sentence outline the pupil must be able to distinguish between the main and the minor points. This type of judgment is an essential phase of the selection and organization of the important points in the material being read.

3. *To observe whether the author's conclusions are based upon reliable data, or upon mere opinion and prejudice.* Some authors make an effort to maintain a strictly scientific attitude and base their conclusions on the available data; whereas other writers have nothing to offer but their own opinions and prejudices. The pupil should be trained to observe what evidence, proof, or reasons the author presents as a basis for his generalizations or conclusions. Correct inferences from reliable data must be accepted as valid, but statements based upon opinions and prejudices have almost no validity.

Further, it would be helpful to the pupil to know the fundamental beliefs and prejudices of the author. Is the author a democrat, or a republican, or a socialist; a catholic, or a protestant, or a jew, a fundamentalist or a modernist; a psychoanalyst, or a behaviorist; a progressive, or a conservative; a pacifist, or a militarist? Unless an author is dealing with objective data in a strictly scientific attitude, his statement and conclusions will be colored most surely by his particular types of beliefs, opinions, and prejudicial attitudes. His beliefs and opinions are colored glasses through which he looks out upon the world. If the pupil has this type of knowledge, he can

understand easily why one writer of history praises Theodore Roosevelt and Hoover, but "damns with faint praise" such stalwarts as Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt; or why he praises the latter two and damns the former. Also, the pupil can understand why one writer praises the World Court and the League of Nations; and another, equally eminent, speaks disparagingly of these institutions. Again, the pupil can understand why one eminent man favors the expansion of the army and navy, and another opposes this same program. Every writer views the problem under discussion from his own background of experience; he cannot do otherwise. Our background of opinions and prejudices colors all our thinking. Don green glasses and all the world looks green.

Some teachers of social studies and other controversial subjects make an effort to conceal their partisan affiliations; and thus appear to be unbiased, open-minded, and non-partisan in their teaching. Usually, these efforts at impartiality are only half successful; but they may mystify the pupils, and even deceive the teachers themselves. It would be far better if the teachers would frankly admit their prejudicial attitudes and post in conspicuous places in their schoolrooms a statement of their partisan affiliations and attitudes. For example, I am:

- A republican and bitter anti-newdealer;
- A baptist and fundamentalist in religion;
- A pacifist and an isolationist;
- A traditionalist or non-progressive in education;
- A capitalist in the field of economics.

With this information in their possession the pupils would know how "to take" their teachers. The pupils could make allowance for bias of their teachers, and no one would be deceived or falsely instructed.

Finally, it is absolutely essential that the pupils learn to distinguish clearly between valid conclusions from reliable data and the expression of opinions and prejudices unsupported by evidence or proof.

4. *To test the facts and conclusions in the light of observation and experimentation.* Facts are valuable to the extent that they contribute to the solution of problems; conclusions are valuable to the extent to which they explain and control facts. Frequently, conclusions can be tested by the experimental method. For example, the pupil can determine for himself whether the whole method of memorizing is more economical than the part method in memorizing different types of material. Similarly, other conclusions may be accepted or rejected on the basis of experimentation; but the pupil must know and follow the proper methods of procedure in conducting experiments, for an experiment is worthless if it is not conducted according to strictly scientific methods. Again, facts may be evaluated in the light of one's own observations. If an author states that acquiring the drug habit is one of the grave dangers of patent medicines, the reader can judge the truth of this statement in the light of his own observations. However, care must be taken to avoid generalization on the basis of a few cases. Only tentative conclusions may be drawn from casual observations or from isolated cases. To be accepted as valid, conclusions must be supported by an abundance of reliable data.

5. *To evaluate facts by appealing to authority.* The reputation of an author may be considered and his views compared to the views of recognized authorities in the same field. This procedure would tend to develop a

wholesome respect for the views of the leading thinkers in the various fields of human endeavor. If the author has an established reputation as a careful thinker and his views agree fairly well with the conclusions of other eminent authorities in the same field, his statements may be accepted as representing the present state of knowledge. However, authority should not be substituted for experimentation. The pupil should hold a tentative attitude toward all knowledge accepted upon authority, being ready at any time to modify his ideas in the light of any new knowledge that may become available. Moreover, a man should be accepted as an authority only in his own field. It is hazardous to accept a statesman as an authority on a scientific question, or a scientist as an authority on a question of law or religion. There is a tendency on the part of careless thinkers to carry the weight of authority into foreign fields. The pupil should be led to see that a distinguished man is, as a rule, an authority in one field only. Authority is by its very nature specific rather than general. When a great man presumes to speak on questions outside his own field of specialization, he is no longer an authority.

6. *To evaluate facts on the basis of their relation to life.* Facts closely related to life are worth far more than facts only remotely related to life. Facts pertaining to health, for example, are worth much more than facts relating to a foreign language which the pupil may never be able to make much use of in any practical way. Pupils should have constant practice in evaluating facts on the basis of their applicability to real life situations. Frequently, pupils ask, "What is the use of studying this subject?" The teacher should consider this question an op-

portunity, not an insult. This question gives the teacher an opportunity to explain the practical applications of the subject, and to show how the materials of the subject will help the pupils to adjust themselves to life situations. The more closely a subject is related to life the greater is its educational value. Moreover, pupils cannot afford to spend their time on subjects that have but little educational value, for there is an abundance of really valuable material to engage their attention. Teachers should cultivate a fine sense of educational values, and should stimulate and guide the pupils in the exercise of this type of judgment. Of course, a subject may be very valuable for one pupil and have but little value for another.

7. *To use a rating scale to determine the worth of material.* Guide the pupils in the construction of a tentative scale that will aid in making their judgments more accurate. This scale should consist of items extending over the whole range of reliability from the highest to the lowest. The position of any item on the scale may be determined by the consensus of opinion of the class. Points ranging from 100 to 0 may be assigned to the various steps on the scale. The following scale is merely suggestive.

Well established facts and principles	100
Experimental studies carefully conducted	80
Textbooks written by recognized authorities	60
Discussions based upon opinions and prejudices	40
Political campaign propaganda	20
Patent medicine testimonials	0

The use of such a scale would tend to make the pupil's judgments more accurate and would emphasize the fact that materials do vary widely in reliability. On this scale

well written textbooks would be rated 60; the expressions of mere opinions 40; and scientific studies, 80. Similarly, any type of reading material may be placed on the scale and given its proper numerical value. However, such a scale should be regarded merely as a device for getting pupils to exercise more accurate judgments, and not a scientific instrument for measuring the reliability of material

After evaluation comes *memorization*. Teach the pupil how to memorize material. Much time may be wasted in aimless repetition. The selection and organization of the important points are basic factors in logical memory, but permanent retention requires the application of additional factors. It has been found that *reciting to oneself* aids the memory. The pupil may well take his eyes off the book as soon as he has some familiarity with the material, and try to recall what he has read, referring to the book to prompt himself when he is unable to proceed with recall.

Another factor influencing the efficiency of memory is the general type of method employed. No one method is best for all types of material; but the whole method will usually give the best results with connected discourse; as poetry or prose. The whole method makes for better retention because it provides for better connections among the items to be retained. The experimental data are inconclusive; but, on the whole, the *whole method* appears to be more effective than the *part method* for thought material and for permanent retention.

Thoroughness of learning is another important factor in memory. Material half learned or barely learned is forgotten rapidly. Well learned material is retained far better. Many students set for themselves far too low a

standard of thoroughness in the study type of reading. They think they have exerted themselves sufficiently when they have read the material over once. This is only a beginning. There is no easy road to learning. Much work in addition to reading a lesson over once must be done to insure mastery of the material. The important points must be selected and organized; several properly spaced reviews must be conducted. The pupil should not expect learning to be permanent unless the essential factors of learning are applied effectively.

Moreover, the spacing of reviews is important. The first review should come shortly after the initial learning; probably the same day, and most certainly not later than the next day. After one or two reviews with daily intervals, the time may be lengthened to a week, then to a month or longer.

Any one who has taught the same subject a few years in succession has ample evidence from his own experience of the value of thoroughness and repetition in learning. Frequently, teachers remark, "I never knew history until I had taught the subject two or three years." Why did they not learn history as students? Why did they learn the subject as teachers? Chiefly because they learned their lessons more thoroughly as teachers; and, also, because teaching the subject several times provided the reviews or repetitions necessary for mastery. The teacher would be a poor learner, indeed, if he did not master the facts of his subject by teaching these facts to several groups of pupils over a period of years. Teaching provides for over-learning, for organization, and for repetition. Pupils should utilize these same factors in their study.

Teach the pupils to use their ideas. The function of ideas is to guide experience. Unfortunately, much that is

taught in school is merely formal knowledge playing no significant role in the life of the pupil. If he does forget this type of knowledge, he suffers no great loss. So forgetting proceeds at a rapid rate. It is to be regretted that the idea that education is a process of acquiring knowledge still dominates the schools. The pupil is encouraged in the belief that he has done his full duty when he has memorized material and recited to the satisfaction of his teacher. After the final examination, he is at full liberty to forget all that he has learned in the course. In fact, many people have become so accustomed to forgetting their ideas, or placing them in "cold storage" that they think the emphasis on the use of ideas is crass and materialistic. People will admit they are acquiring their ideas for use at some future time; but, at the same time, they think present use unworthy. The belief seems to be that ideas are fine things to have but they are not for use. Contrary to this popular notion, modern psychology teaches that ideas are the result of experience; and, in turn should guide further experience—and this is their function or use. True ideas are essentially instrumental. Therefore, the pupil should cultivate the habit of putting his ideas to work in the present. It would be a waste of time for a pupil to acquire ideas about the study type of reading, if his own reading is not thereby improved.

With respect to the effective skills involved in the work type of reading, Marion Monroe states: ²⁶

"Silent reading skills are essential for the purposes of getting information, solving problems, understanding situ-

²⁶ Monroe, Marion, *Diagnosing Reading Difficulties*, 34th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, p 205. Quoted by permission of the Society

ations, verifying facts, making judgments, satisfying curiosity, and preparing assignments.

"a. The child should have mastered the mechanics of silent reading with appropriate skill for the passage to be read.

"b. He should be able to skim material quickly, using tables of contents, indexes, library cards, and readers' guides suitable to his age. He should be able to locate specific material easily.

"c. He should be able to understand meanings. He should be able to find the central thought of a passage or obtain precise details as needed. He should know how to use the dictionary and encyclopedia, or how to find supplementary material to explain passages not fully understood.

"d. He should be able to prepare the material for recall by making summaries, outlines, abstracts, and reviews."

SUMMARY

The important factors in the study type of reading are:

1. Reading with specific aims or for specific purposes.
2. Selecting and organizing the important points.
3. Evaluating or judging the worth of the material.
4. Memorizing or fixing in mind the important items.
5. Using or applying the ideas acquired.

Check the pupil's reading habits in the light of these factors and apply remedial measures according to the needs of each pupil. Lead the pupils to set up these fac-

tors as standards to be attained in their own reading. Teach the pupils:

1. To read for legitimate purposes.
2. To select and organize the important points.
3. To memorize material applying economic methods.
4. To use or apply their ideas to improve their own reading ability.

ORAL READING

Since the bulk of reading is silent reading, the pupil should learn, first of all, to be a good silent reader. However, the need for oral reading occurs with sufficient frequency to make it worth while to learn to read well orally. For example, the high school pupil may have need to read orally in many situations, such as:

Reading a news article for a group of friends;

Reading the minutes of an organization;

Reading the resolutions offered by committees;

Reading the ritual of an organization in initiatory ceremonies;

Reading literary selections for better appreciation;

Reading a part in a play in class;

Reading poems and stories to entertain others.

In certain lines of work oral reading is demanded on numerous occasions. Teachers, lawyers, ministers, and other professional people can use oral reading to advantage on many occasions. In fact, anyone occupying a position of leadership can make good use of his oral reading ability. Therefore, teaching pupils to read well orally may well be considered an important phase of the teaching of English.

What psychological principles should be applied in the teaching of oral reading? In the old fashioned schools of some fifty years ago the teacher devoted considerable time to a process she called teaching oral reading. The teacher was earnest and sincere and the process was time consuming; but the pupils made very slow progress. All the reading in class was oral. The teacher would call the reading class; a group of pupils would seat themselves at the front of the room. Then the teacher would say to the pupil at the head of the class, "Read the first stanza or the first paragraph." The pupil would stand up and read the assignment from one of McGuffey's readers as he thought reading ought to be done. When the pupil had finished reading the teacher would say, "I don't like the way you read that: read it again." When the pupil had finished his second reading, the teacher would comment tersely, "That was a little better; sit down." Often the second reading was no better than the first; sometimes it was worse. Each member of the class read in turn and was accorded a similar treatment, except a few pupils were permitted to read without any comment from the teacher. In a few instances, pupils were praised for their good reading. What opportunity did any pupil have to learn to read well, or to improve his present ability? Almost none. It was a blind trial and error process. How could this situation be transformed into a real learning situation? Briefly, by providing for the factors that make practice effective. These factors have been referred to repeatedly in earlier chapters; but they will be repeated here for emphasis and for the convenience of the reader. What are the factors that make practice effective?

1. The will to learn or the desire to read well;

2. Insight into what is to be learned; being able to identify the bonds to be formed;
3. Properly distributed practice,
4. Practice guided by specific aims. Practice should aim at improvement on specific points rather than at general improvement.
5. Definite standards of attainment;
6. Frequent checking of results and keeping the pupil informed of his progress.

How can these principles be applied in teaching oral reading?

The will to learn may be stimulated by emphasizing the value of oral reading. If the pupil can be brought to a realization that a good oral reading ability will be a distinct advantage to him, he will want to learn to read well. Discuss with the pupils the various uses that they can make of oral reading. Lead them to see that the good reader has an advantage over the poor reader in many social situations, and they will all want to be good oral readers. Normally, a pupil desires an ability when he appreciates the value for him of this ability. Moreover, if the teacher can read well orally, her example will stimulate the pupil to try to acquire a similar reading ability. In addition, rivalry and judicious praise can be used to advantage to stimulate the desire to read well.

To provide *insight* stimulate and guide the pupils in working out the characteristics of good oral reading. How does excellent oral reading differ from the inferior quality? Can the pupil recognize good oral reading when he hears it? If so, how? What are the essential qualities of good oral reading? Have different pupils read and ask the class to evaluate the reading. Ask them to identify

the characteristics of good oral reading. Assign for study any good books that are available on oral reading. Some of the more important factors of good oral reading are:

1. Understanding the material read;
2. Voice adapted to the meaning and mood of the selection.
3. Correct phrasing or grouping of words;
4. Emphasis properly placed to convey meaning;
5. Rate appropriate to meaning and mood;
6. Correct pronunciation of all words;
7. Distinct articulation,
8. Reading ideas, and not words, words, words.

Develop each standard through explanation and illustration until the pupils understand it and appreciate its significance. Lead the pupils to set up these standards as goals to be attained in their own oral reading. Judge the pupil's efforts at oral reading in the light of these standards. Make the criticisms constructive. Instead of saying I do not like the way you read that, read it again; say you do not appear to understand what you are trying to read. Again, the teacher may say you mispronounce many of your words; or you emphasize the wrong words. Then the teacher should suggest to the pupil what he needs to do to improve on these points. However, the pupil should not try to improve on all these points at the same time. Much more can be accomplished by concentrating on one point at a time. Criticise the pupil's most outstanding error and suggest practice exercises that he may employ to overcome this error. When satisfactory progress has been made with this error, direct criticism at the next most glaring defect in the pupil's reading.

Thus have the pupil center his attention on his faults one by one and practice to improve on each one in turn. This procedure provides for two important factors in learning; (1) practice applied to the point of error, and (2) a definite aim for each practice period. Moreover, this procedure gives the pupil an insight into the specific things that he needs to do to improve his oral reading ability.

Check the pupil's progress frequently on a standard oral reading test. Construct a score card based upon the standards or characteristics of good oral reading and check the pupil's progress through the use of this score card.

Monroe and Backus attacked the more specific problems of helping pupils overcome their reading disabilities through diagnostic and remedial exercises.²⁷ They administered an oral reading test, a word analysis test, and a word discrimination test to several groups of pupils. An analysis of the results for a group of secondary pupils having marked reading disabilities revealed the following typical errors:

1. Faulty vowels; as pin for pen.
2. Faulty consonants; as ship for clip.
3. Reversals; as was for saw.
4. Additions; as trap for tap.
5. Omissions; as back for black.
6. Substitutions; as duck for hen.
7. Addition of words; as once upon a time for once.
8. Omission of words; as the dog for the little dog.

²⁷ Monroe, Marion, and Backus, Bertie, *Remedial Reading*; Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1937.

9. Refusals; the pupil making no effort to pronounce the word waits to be told.

A chart was constructed showing the profile of errors for each pupil. As a rule, the individual pupil did not make every error in the list. For example, one pupil with an IQ of 99 exhibited as his chief errors: faulty vowels, reversals, refusals, and addition of words. Another pupil with an IQ of 92 had a slightly different list: faulty vowels, omission of sounds, repetitions, and omission of words. With the whole group faulty vowels and consonants had the highest frequency, but other types of errors were characteristic of certain pupils. It was evident that remedial work to be effective must be individualized.

Remedial exercises were planned to help the pupils overcome their errors. Pupils having common errors were grouped and taught in small classes; but much of the practice work was individualized, that is, it was designed to help the individual pupil overcome his particular weaknesses. For a detailed account of these remedial exercises the reader is referred to *Remedial Reading* by Monroe and Backus, and to *Children Who Cannot Read* by Marion Monroe.

Good results were obtained from these remedial exercises. Monroe and Backus, summarizing the results of 14 weeks of remedial work, state:

"Remedial work in reading is effective at the junior high school level when given according to the conditions and methods described in these two schools. Children working in groups are able to make median gains of from 0.5 to 1.3 years in 14 weeks' remedial work. Individual cases often show gains of more than two years

by these methods. Gains in remedial work were accompanied in many cases by greater interests in reading and favorable changes in behavior."

Similar results were obtained with other groups of pupils at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Marion Monroe, writing in the Thirty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, gives the following suggestions to guide remedial teaching:

1. Remedial work is most effective when given individually.

2. Remedial work may be given to several children at once if the children have similar types of difficulty and are similarly retarded in reading.

3. Remedial work should be given at a favorable time, when the child is not fatigued.

4. Remedial work should be given systematically at regular periods.

5. The remedial period should be long enough for the child and teacher to become warmed up to the work, but short enough to avoid fatigue.

6. The books and materials should be adapted to the level of the child's reading achievement.

7. Progress should be made known to the child with generous praise.

8. Remedial reading instruction should be directed toward overcoming the child's specific difficulties in reading.

9. Remedial work should be accompanied by physical and mental therapy when such treatment is needed.

10. Retests should be scheduled at frequent intervals.²⁸

²⁸ Monroe, Marion, *Diagnosis and Treatment of Reading Disabilities*; 24th Yearbook of National Society for the Study of Education, Chapter XII, 1934. Quoted by the Permission of the Society

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CHAPTER VI

LITERATURE

THE FUNCTIONS OF LITERATURE

Why should the high school pupil be urged to read literature? What can literature do for the pupil? A consideration of these questions divides the great fraternity of English Teachers into two apparently hostile camps. One group maintains that the function of literature is to enrich the pupil's experience; the other group believes that the pupil should read for pleasure. The latter group associates literature with the hours of leisure, with recreational activities. The former group associates literature with living, with the whole of life, holding a more exalted view of the function of literature. Bennett expresses this view of the function of literature in his *Literary Taste and How to Form It*.¹ He maintains that:

"The aim of literary study is not to amuse the hours of leisure; it is to awake oneself, it is to be alive, to intensify one's capacity for pleasure, for sympathy, and for comprehension. It is to change utterly one's relations with the world."

However, Bennett does give slight recognition to the idea of reading for pleasure. He says:

"Of course, literature has a minor function, that of passing the time in an agreeable and harmless fashion,

¹ Bennett, Arnold, *Literary Taste and How to Form It*, p 12, Geo. H. Doran and Company, Garden City, N. Y.

by giving momentary faint pleasure. Vast multitudes of people (among whom may be numbered not a few habitual readers) utilize only the minor functions of literature; by implication they class it with golf, bridge, or soporifics. Literary genius, however, had no intention of competing with these devices for fleeting the empty hours; and all such uses of literature may be left out of account."^{1a}

Likewise, C. Alphonso Smith upholds the idea that literature should be a means of enriching one's experience, should be an interpretation of life rather than a substitute for life.² In his most excellent book, *What Can Literature Do For Me?* he points out that literature can provide an outlet for the pupil's feelings, keep before him a vision of the ideal, give him a better knowledge of human nature, restore the past to him, show him the glory of the commonplace, and give him a mastery of his own language.

Hosic made a study to determine the consensus of opinion as to the nature and purpose of literature.³ He consulted seventy-five contemporary writers in the fields of English and education. In summarizing this study, Hosic states:

"The opinion most commonly expressed by current writers concerning the nature and purpose of literature is that *it enlarges and enriches the experience of the reader and extends his knowledge of life.*"

A few excerpts from the writers consulted by Hosic

^{1a} From *Literary Taste and How to Form It*, p. 12, by Arnold Bennett. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., New York.

² Smith, C. Alphonso, *What Can Literature Do For Me?* Doubleday, Page and Company, Garden City, N. Y.

³ Hosic, James F., *Empirical Studies in School Reading*, Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 114, 1921.

will clarify and amplify the view that the function of literature is to enrich human experience.

Carpenter, Baker, and Scott state: "Literature portrays human life, its activities, its ideas and emotions, and those things about which human interest and emotion cluster."⁴
* * * * Literature is therefore a presentation and interpretation of life—a 'criticism of life' is Matthew Arnold's well-known phrase—and as such, must be of the highest value in acquainting the young with life as it is in its more permanent and universal aspects, and with the judgments upon it, the interpretation of it, and the emotional coloring given to it by writers of wide knowledge, deep insight, and right feeling."

Similarly, William Henry Hudson says: "Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language."⁵

Likewise, George Edward Woodbury says: "Literature is an art of expression. The material which it employs is experience; or in other words, literature is the expression of life. Action, emotion, and thought are the three great divisions of life, and constitute experience. Literature undertakes to represent such experience through the medium of language, and to bring it home to the understanding of the reader."⁶

⁴ Carpenter, G. R., Baker, F. T., and Scott, F. N., *The Teaching of English in Elementary and Secondary Schools*, 158; Longmans, Green and Company, N. Y.

⁵ Hudson, W. H., *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, p. 11; G. B. Harry and Company, London, England.

⁶ Woodberry, George Edward, *The Appreciation of Literature*, p. 11; Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1922.

George H. Betts expresses a similar idea: "Through reading the child is able to enrich his experience. This power will emancipate him from the *immediate* in time and place, and will bring him into contact with the thought and life of other ages and climes. Through reading he ceases to be provincial, and takes his place as a member of the human family and a citizen of the world."⁷

The view that literature is an interpretation of life, a way of living is strongly emphasized by Charters in his statement:

"Tenneyson's *Crossing the Bar* is a way of thinking and feeling about death. With this may be contrasted another way as presented to us in Browning's *Prospice*; or, still another, that portrayed by Bryant in *An Old Man's Funeral*. *The Lord's Prayer* is a way of expressing veneration and worship for a loving but all powerful God. *Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep* is a method of asking in simple language for the care of God through the night. *Excelsior* is a way of viewing unconquerable aspirations. *Macbeth* is a way of thinking and feeling about the progress of unfettered ambition. *Hamlet* is a way of thinking and feeling about a life of indecision. *Job* is a way of thinking and feeling about the significance of suffering. Every unit of poetry or prose is a way of thinking, feeling, or acting about something."⁸

Speaking before the National Educational Association in New York City, June, 1938, Pearl Buck concluded her address on Literature and Life with the significant statement:

⁷ Betts, George H., *Classroom Method and Management*, p. 134; Bobbs Merrill Company, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁸ Charters, W. W., *Methods of Teaching*, p. 36; Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago, Illinois

"We ought when we put down a book to feel a deeper sense of completion of self, not an escape from it. We ought to understand that self better and feel in closer accord with it and more content with it. If we do, then the book is literature, and literature has made its contribution to life."⁹

Similar views were expressed by most of the writers consulted by Hosis in his investigation. Of course, there are a few exceptions; but, as a rule, these writers insist that literature is a way of living and not a substitute for living. We conclude therefore that the idea that the function of literature is to enrich human experience is widely accepted. Literature is an interpretation of life, not a substitute for real living. The primary function of literature is to aid the individual in making his adjustments to life situations.

Another idea frequently expressed in Hosis's study is the notion that the experience that literature provides is primarily emotional. For example, Winchester states:

"It is the power to appeal to the emotions that gives a book permanent interest, and consequently literary power."

Further, Winchester says:

"And the point to be noticed here is that it is this power over emotion that makes literature an interpreter of life. For life, in the large moral sense in which we use the word, is determined, not principally by outward facts and circumstances, nor yet by thought and speculation, but by its emotions."¹⁰

⁹ Buck, Pearl, *Literature and Life*, Journal of National Education Association, 27 171-176, 1938

¹⁰ Winchester, T. C., *Some Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 42, Macmillan Company, New York.

There is a large element of truth in the idea that literature appeals to the emotional nature of man. The reading of literature may produce strong feeling tones, but the appeal must be first of all to the intellect. Feeling tones are correlated with sense experience, with images, and with ideas. Strong feeling tones are associated with vivid images, and clear ideas. The pupil experiences strong feeling tones when he images vividly and thinks clearly.

Moreover, literature usually arouses feeling tones rather than emotions. It is only the most exciting or most pathetic passages or scenes that arouse emotions. Perhaps, most writers mean *feeling tones* when they use the term *emotion*. Naturally writers are inaccurate in the use of terms in a more or less unfamiliar field. But there is more than a confusion of terms implied in the statement that literature makes its appeal to the emotions; there is, also, a confusion of ideas. There is the implication that literature can and does make its appeal directly to the emotions without much intellectual activity on the part of the reader. To this view modern psychology does not subscribe. Literature cannot appeal directly to the emotions; it must make its appeal through the sense organs to the intellect. To arouse feeling tones impressions must be carried to the central nervous system and arouse imagery and thought. To feel intensely the reader must image vividly or think clearly. The feeling tone is a by-product of imagination and thought. Furthermore, the reader does not need to strive for feeling tones; feeling tones and emotions are controlled by the autonomic nervous system. The reader's primary concern, therefore, should be with imagery and with ideas. With

respect to the relation of feeling and thought in teaching literature, Ruth Mary Weeks says:

"My enthusiasm for teaching the appreciation of literature does not, therefore, lead me to believe in letting English teaching go soft and turn into a mere collective quivering of emotion."¹¹

Further, Weeks holds that the child should be taught to think soundly, feel deeply, act vigorously, and laugh merrily. Literature should stimulate laughter, but the laughter should be keen-witted and thoughtful.

The verdict of psychology is clear on the relation of knowing and feeling. Man cannot be dichotomized into a thinking being and a feeling being. The mind acts as a unit. Man thinks and feels simultaneously. Feeling is a correlate of thinking, not an independent function. There are no sense organs of feeling to which literature can make an appeal. In reality, feeling is the pleasant or unpleasant phase of senses experience, imagination, memory, or thought. Since feeling or emotion is simply the way an experience affects us, we should read not for enjoyment but for the whole experience; and the attention should be centered on the thought or content of the selection. The feeling tone may be one of sadness as well as one of gladness. Can the experiencing of a sad feeling tone be called enjoyment? With respect to this confusion of the relation of feeling to thought in the field of literature, John J. DeBoer says that we have fallen a victim to the ill considered conclusion that appreciation is equivalent to pleasure.¹² Literature is something more than a perpetual glad game. To quote:

¹¹ Weeks, Ruth Mary, *Teaching the Whole Child*, English Journal, 20:9-17, 1931.

¹² DeBoer, John J., *Teaching Literature for Enjoyment*, English Journal, 20:298-304, 1931.

"Legitimate literary material will, of course, frequently make delightful reading. Even in such cases, however, pleasure is a by-product of appreciation rather than the thing itself. The pupil who exhibits enjoyment over the horrible revenge of Hamish should be sent to the school psychiatrist without delay. If the scene of Buena Vista brings a glow of satisfaction rather than tears of mortification, the school should prepare for the treatment of a baffling case of juvenile delinquency. Without doubt the greatest of the world's literature has dealt with tragic themes, from Sophocles to Melville. He must be perverse indeed who finds joy in the spectacle of humanity in bonds."

Another result of this tendency to dichotomize the child is the assumption that the science department operates on the intellect of the pupil, and the English department on the emotions. As a result, neither department performs its function very effectively. Both departments—every department—should teach the whole child. Science should contribute more than knowledge. It is important that the pupil learns to like science and that he acquires a scientific attitude. The pupil should learn not only to interpret literature; he should acquire also a taste for the best reading material. Literature differs from science in that it deals with situations to which stronger feeling tones are attached. Literature deals with vital human experiences and is laden with the richest thoughts of all the ages. Science deals with the processes of nature and is more impersonal. The function of science as a school subject is to help the pupil make a better adjustment to his physical environment; whereas, the function of literature is to aid the pupil in achieving a better adjustment to the spiritual world. Consequently, litera-

ture makes a stronger appeal to the affective phases of human experience. Therefore to think of literature as material to be read primarily for enjoyment is to depreciate its value. Also, to think that literature makes its appeal primarily to the emotions is to depreciate its intellectual content. The truth is literature appeals primarily to the intellect of man and through the intellect arouses appropriate feeling tones. Teaching to be effective must respect the unitary nature of the human personality. The true teacher teaches the whole child and not a detached fragment.

Summary of Section. The function of literature is to enrich human experience. Literature is an interpretation of life. Literature makes its appeal primarily to the intellect and through the intellect arouse appropriate feeling tones. Comprehension is essential to appreciation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

A Background in Experience—Apperception

The appreciation of literature depends fundamentally upon comprehension, and comprehension depends in turn upon apperception. Apperception may be defined as the process of interpreting new experiences in terms of past experiences. The pupil interprets what he reads in terms of his own experience. Therefore, children cannot appreciate selections presenting the experiences of mature people. On this point Waitman Barbe says:

"No child is able to read *The Light of Other Days* with full understanding. He does not have the experience necessary to interpret it. Only those who have passed far

beyond 'the smiles, the tears of boyhood years, the words of love then spoken,' and can recall from personal experiences 'the eyes that shone, now dimmed and gone,' will be able to feel like one who treads alone some banquet hall deserted."¹³

For the same reason the child cannot fully appreciate *Little Boy Blue* or *Forty Years Ago*. Many selections found in school readers and in compilations for high schools are too advanced or too foreign to the pupil's experience to be comprehended. In a study of the comprehension difficulties of a group of ninth grade pupils, Irion found that most of the pupils failed to comprehend adequately the selections ordinarily taught in that grade.¹⁴ For example, one pupil with an intelligent quotient of 96 gave the following interpretation of *The Destruction of Sennacherib* by Lord Byron.

"The assyrian, and Aryan, came down upon the city of Ashur like a wolf on the fold; and his garments were gleaming in purple and gold. The points of (their) spears was like stars on the sea, when the tides come in by night. He had a highly decorated but not very efficient army and undertook the invasion to humble the Chaldeans.

The Assyrians defeated the Gentiles and the army was defeated at sunset. The defeat was due to poor generalship.

A terrible blast, that is, an explosion struck the enemy and the eyes of the sleepers were covered with wax and

¹³ From *Famous Poems Explained*, by Waitman Barbe, used by special permission of Noble and Noble, Publishers, Inc., 100 Fifth Avenue, New York City

¹⁴ Irion, T. W. H., *Comprehension Difficulties of Ninth Grade Students in the Study of Literature*; Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No 189., 1925

they all lay withered and strown like the leaves of the forest after a snowstorm has blown over the land.

The widows of Ashur were crying out loudly for revenge upon the Assyrians who had killed their husbands, and the Gentiles and the idols in a temple in Palestine melted like snow in the power of the Lord."

Did not this pupil fail utterly in his effort to appreciate this poem? Confusion and appreciation do not dwell in the same mental habitation. It would be more appropriate to call this pupil's reactions to the poem *depreciation*. However, the failure to appreciate this poem cannot be attributed to the lack of ability, for the pupil in question had an intelligence quotient of 96. Apparently the failure to appreciate was due largely to an inadequate background in experience. Probably, a good introduction to the poem would have solved most of the pupil's comprehension difficulties. The Bible story on which the poem is based is told in Second Kings, chapters 18 and 19. A careful reading of these chapters would provide the information necessary for the interpretation of the poem. The reader must know that Sennacherib was king of Assyria, and that his invasion of the Kingdom of Isreal was all but complete when his army was smitten by the "Angel of the Lord." The sacred writer describes the occurrence in quaint language:

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred, fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib King of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."

If, in addition to the Bible story, the pupil had an opportunity to read a good introduction to the poem, his

difficulties of comprehension would be greatly reduced. This introductory material would provide a sufficient background in experience to make appreciation possible, even probable.

The authors of textbooks in literature would do well to provide appropriate introductions to all the more difficult selections. Happily, many of the recent compilations of high school literature are making use of the idea of brief but informing introductions. However, some of these introductions are too brief, while others are too long, presenting irrelevant material. To be valuable an introduction need not be long, but it should provide for the pupil the exact information that he will need in interpreting the selection. A twenty page biography of the author may have little or no value as an introduction, but some one incident in his life may be essential. To appreciate Byrant's *To a Waterfowl* the reader needs to know the story of the author's journey to Plainfield and his misgivings about his future, and his observation of the "lone wandering" fowl. These facts form the background for the poem and especially for the author's reflections in the last stanza.

In brief, the function of an introduction is to provide the facts the pupil will need, in addition to his own personal experience, as a basis for understanding and appreciating any selection. The introduction should provide background and atmosphere for appreciation.

Apperception is, also, an important principle to be observed in selecting material for appreciation. The approach to the older types of literature may well be made through the more modern. Modern literature is easier for the pupil to understand, because it is closer to his own experience. The setting of many of the great

classics is too far removed from the pupil's experiences to be appreciated. Apparently, many teachers think that classical writers are greater than the more modern writers—and they may be; but the greatness of the selection is not the only, or even the primary consideration. The first consideration is the effect that the selection will have on the pupil. Dolch has well said:

"A lesser classic well understood is of much greater value than a great classic not understood at all; for it is not the intrinsic worth of the course of study that counts at all; it is the results actually gained in the minds and the character of the class."¹⁵

What effect is the study of this selection having on the pupil is therefore by far a more important consideration than the literary merit of the selection. An article of food may be rich in nutritive material, but it is of no value to the child, unless he can digest and assimilate the nutriment. High class food, physical or mental, is not all that is required. The child must have material that he can digest and assimilate. So the pupil must have not merely high class literature as judged by literary canons; he must have material that he can understand and, therefore, appreciate. The pupil's need is for literature that will help him to make better adjustments to the world of reality.

Furthermore, the pupil should not be expected to begin his study of literature with the great classics, particularly the more difficult and remote selections. The principle of apperception requires a progression from the easier to the more difficult, from the near to the remote. The ability to appreciate develops gradually through successful re-

¹⁵ Dolch, William D., *Teaching Literature*, *English Journal*, 9:185-193, 1920.

action to selection after selection. The pupil will do well to be able to appreciate the more difficult classics by the end of the high school course. Moreover, appreciation cannot outrun experience. The pupil must have time to mature before he can appreciate the literature dealing with the experiences of men and women. A boy of ten years cannot appreciate Field's *Little Boy Blue* or *The Village Blacksmith*, since these selections recount the experiences of men who have lived many years and have known the lights and shadows of life.

Apperception may be facilitated by the use of pictures. Pictures are a good substitute for direct sense experience. They are therefore a distinct aid in the appreciation of literature. Pictures "transform leaden words into glowing realities." They make imagery more clear, and thus prevent gross errors in the interpretation of verbal statements. Ichabod Crane's race with the headless horseman is made more real to the pupil by a picture such as is found in the *Beacon Lights of Literature*. The opening scene in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is made more impressive by the illustration in *Good Reading for High Schools*.

Washington Irving in his sketch, *Stratford-on-Avon*, describes the home of Shakespeare: "My first visit to the house where Shakespeare was born, and where, according to tradition, he was brought up to his father's craft of wool-combing. It is a small mean looking edifice of wood and plaster, a true nesting place of genius, which seems to delight in hatching its offspring in by-corners."

From this description it is difficult for the reader to get a clear picture of the home of the famous writer. A good picture gives a better conception than line upon line of description. Any type of picture may be used; as clippings from magazines, slides, or motion pictures.

Motion pictures are the best type when they are prepared for educational purposes. Unfortunately, motion pictures prepared for commercial purposes may distort rather than represent faithfully literary materials.

Maps and diagrams may be used to good advantage to aid the pupil in perceiving distances and spatial relationships.

However, the best basis for apperception is the pupil's own sense experience. Encourage the pupil to participate as fully as he has opportunity in all the basic experiences of life. Embrace every opportunity to visit places of literary interest. Travel provides a variety of sense experience and enriches the mind with a diversity of ideas.

Analysis

Since appreciation must wait upon understanding, a thought analysis of any selection is a vital factor in appreciation. However, a sharp distinction should be made between a thought analysis and minute dissection. Centering attention on minor details is a hindrance to comprehension. With the dissecting attitude of mind the pupil fails to see the forest for the trees. Comprehension is essentially a process of grasping relationships, not an examination of minutia. Of course, it may be necessary occasionally to look up the meaning of an unfamiliar word or the meaning of an obscure reference; but this type of activity should not monopolize the pupil's time and attention. Breaking a selection up into its structural parts and observing the relation of part to part is the type of analysis essential to appreciation. This type of analysis not only aids in grasping the thought of a particular selection but also reveals the structure of the literary type

under consideration. For example, if the class is studying the short story, analysis should enable the pupil to follow the development of the story and should bring into clear relief the essentials of a good short story. Since appreciation is a process of evaluation, standards must be developed whereby the pupils can judge the merits of short stories. Usually, the story can be divided into three parts: introduction, development, and conclusion.

The introduction may be brief, or it may constitute a large fraction of the story. Whatever may be the length of the introduction, its function is to present the chief characters and the conditions out of which grows the problem or the conflict of the story. The introduction reveals the difficulty to be overcome, or the opponent to be outwitted, or the disaster to be averted.

The development presents the main characters striving to master the difficulties of the situation, or to overcome the opposing obstacles presented in the introduction. The story develops through a series of episodes leading to a resolution of the difficulties. When the point of triumph or failure is reached, or when a decision is made, this part of the story draws to a close.

The conclusion presents the final action, the outcome of the struggle between the opposing forces, or conflicting personalities, and the final resolution of the difficulties.

The type of analysis recommended may be illustrated with *The Revolt of Mother* by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, a simple realistic story of farm life.

Introduction: The main characters are Sarah and Adoniram Penn and their daughter, Nanny. Sarah inquired of Adoniram why the men were digging over in the field. Adoniram delayed his answer. Sarah insisted, but her husband told her to go into the house and mind

her own affairs. Sarah refused to obey and insisted that she be told the reason for the digging. Finally, Adinoram grudgingly gave the information that the men were digging a cellar for a new barn. Indignant at this information, Sarah went into the house. There she found her daughter, Nanny watching the proceedings from the window. Nanny was eager to know the purpose of the digging. Sammy, the son, contributed a little more unpleasant information to the effect that his father was going to buy four more cows. Sarah said nothing more.

Sarah and Nanny began to wash the dishes. As they worked they discussed the shabbiness of the house in which the Penns had lived for forty years, and incidentally, the shortcomings of the men. Sarah Penn had been a masterly keeper of her little house. When the dishes were done she turned her attention to baking pies, and to the preparation of a good dinner for the family.

Note that the introduction presents the main characters and reveals the conflicting forces: Adoniram's determination to have a new barn and Sarah's long deferred hope of a new house. A grim struggle is foreshadowed.

Development: Adoniram ate his dinner hastily and went out into the yard to unload some wood. Sammy was off to school, and Nanny went to the store. At this juncture Sarah called Adoniram into the house and inquired again why he was building a new barn. He had no explanation to offer. Are you going to buy more cows? was the next question. Again, there was no reply. Sarah's indignation rose to the breaking point. She proceeded to indulge in some plain talk. She went in detail over each room in the house, and accused her husband of providing better for the horses and cows than he was for his wife and children. But Adoniram refused to talk

and went off to his work, leaving Sarah alone in the house.

Nanny, having returned from the store, joined her mother. Together they went about the housework. Nanny suggested that her approaching wedding might take place in the new barn. Her mother gave her a curious look, but said nothing. Sammy came in with a letter from Sarah's brother Hiram. The letter contained the news that Adoniram could buy just the type of horse that he had been wanting, if he would come up to Vermont. Although the trip would require three or four days, Adoniram decided that he should go. Sarah helped him to get his clothes ready and to get on his way. Standing in the door, she watched him until he disappeared from sight. Then Sarah made up her mind to a definite course of action. She would move into the new barn while father was gone; and, when he returned, she would have the new barn remodelled for the new home which he had promised some forty years ago to build on this site.

This is the turning point in the story. Events move swiftly to a climax.

Conclusion: Sarah's action raised great interest in the community. Women threw their shawls over their shoulders and rushed to the neighbor's houses to discuss the situation and to speculate as to what would occur when Adoniram returned. Men gathered at the store to talk about the affair. Some suggested that Sarah was losing her mind. The minister called to talk with her, but he could not quite grasp the meaning of it all. Finally, Adoniram returned. Upon his going to the house, he found the doors locked. He was perplexed. Going over to the barn, he found that the harness room had been converted into a kitchen. "What on earth does this mean, mother?" he gasped. Mother sternly informed him that

she was not crazy, but had come to the barn to live. He could only exclaim, "why mother!" "Get washed for supper," she said. Adinoram ate well, but seemed dazed by the turn of events. After supper he went out and sat down on the door step, supporting his head with his hands. After the dishes were done, Sarah came out and touched him on the shoulder. He heaved a sigh and said I will fix up the barn for you; I will do anything you want. Sarah was overcome by her complete triumph, and put her apron up to her face. "Why mother," said father, "I had no idea you was to set on't as all this comes to."

The conclusion presents the resolution of the conflict between the determination of father to have a new barn and the long cherished hope of mother and daughter for a new house. Father capitulates; mother triumphs. The barn is made over into a new house. Father wanted a new barn; mother wanted a new house: so they compromised and made the new barn into a new house.

This type of analysis reveals not only the thought of the story but also the structure and essential features of a good short story. The pupil should learn to note particularly the conflicting forces presented in the introduction; then he should follow the development through to the climax and the conclusion. By this procedure the pupil should develop some ability to appreciate the skill, or lack of skill, of the writer. Having developed the ability to appreciate a good short story, the pupil will prefer to read the better type, because this type will enrich his experience more and thereby give him more pleasure.

The Novel

Likewise, the novel may be analyzed into its essential elements. To appreciate the novel the pupil must develop effective modes of approach and acceptable standards of judgment. To read a novel intelligently one must know what to look for in this type of literary material. Vision is poor, unless one knows what to look for. *What, then are the essential elements of the novel?* What should the pupil look for when he reads a novel?

The most important phase of the novel is the theme. A novel without a theme would be scarcely worthy of the name. On the more formal side, Horne designates six elements as essential to the novel; plot, character portrayal, motive or verisimilitude, emotional appeal, background, and style.¹⁶ A novel may be considered from any or all of these viewpoints. The pupil should learn to distinguish between the superior and the inferior in these qualities. The best way to develop this ability is through the consideration of concrete illustrations. For example, in studying plot, a simple plot may be compared to a complex one. This study should culminate in a clear conception of the plot as an element of the novel. Considerable emphasis should be given to the relation of the plot to the theme. A similar study of the other elements of the novel should contribute to the pupil's ability to read with intelligent discrimination and with sound judgment.

Smith advocates emphasis on the distinction between romantic and realistic novels.¹⁷ He holds that romantic

¹⁶ Hornes, Charles, *The Technique of the Novel*; Harper and Brothers, New York, 1908.

¹⁷ Smith, Reed, *The Teaching of Literature*, Chapter III; American Book Company, New York, 1935.

and realistic novels require different treatments with different mental attitudes on the part of the reader. The romantic novel deals with the imaginative, the adventurous, the ideal side of life; whereas the realistic novel deals with the real and the actual. The chief aim of the realistic writer is to be true to life, to portray real men and women living in a real world. On the contrary, the characters of the romantic novel have unusual nobility, strength, or wickedness; and in some cases even grotesque or impossible powers from the standpoint of reality. Often they are men of daring and dauntless courage. But the characters of realistic novels are often ordinary people, lacking in glamorous qualities. Further, Smith points out that this distinction between the romantic and the real is true also of the short story, the drama, and poetry. This distinction may be made clear to the pupils by a comparative study of several typical romantic and realistic novels for the purpose of noting how the character differs.

With respect to the elements of the novel, Smith says:

"All stories whether in prose or poetry, whether long or short, have three constituent elements: plot, characters, and setting. These can be simply defined as follows:

Plot—the events that happen.

Characters—the persons to whom the events happen.

Setting—(a) the time when and (b) the place where the events happen."

The plot is a scheme or plan of related episodes, starting with a conflict of some sort and proceeding to a climax and a resolution of the conflict. A series of unrelated episodes do not constitute a plot. Espenshade and Gates say of the plot:

"It is the story itself, the dramatic contact between

opposing forces, in which the chief characters struggle for supremacy."¹⁸

The essence of the novel is some form of conflict or struggle. The hero, or heroine, strives to overcome opposition, to outdo human competitors, to overcome evil impulses, or to realize an ideal. The struggle is the story; and the episodes of the story make the plot. The individuals participating in the struggle are the characters of the novel. The setting is the time, the place, the background of the struggle. In some novels the setting forms only an inconspicuous background; in others the setting influences both plot and characters.

Both Thomas and La Brant agree with Smith in regarding plot, characters, and setting as the essential features of the novel.^{19 20} Of these three, the greatest is character. High school pupils are not able to penetrate deeply into the intricacies of character; but they can classify them in bold outlines as strong or weak, good or bad, static or developing. Pupils enjoy witnessing the good contending with the evil, and the triumph of power, skill, or bravery over opposing forces.

If pupils are taught what to look for in reading a novel, they will read with more insight and more profit. To this end work out with the pupils a few questions that will encourage the analytic type of mental activity. The following list is for illustration and suggestion:

¹⁸ Espenshade, A. H., and Gates, T. J., *The Essentials of English Composition*, p. 366; D. C. Heath and Company, New York, 1933.

¹⁹ Thomas, Charles Swain, *The Teaching of English*, Chapter IX, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1917.

²⁰ La Brant, Lou L., *The Teaching of Literature in the Secondary School*, Chapter V, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1931.

1. What is the chief desire or purpose of the main character?
2. What factors or forces aid him in his struggle? What factors or forces oppose him?
3. What is the theme of the story?
4. Is the struggle with internal impulses or desires or with external forces?
5. Is the main character a static or developing character? The more important minor characters?
6. Is the plot loosely constructed or compact, simple or complex?
7. Are the characters true to life?
8. Is the novel realistic or romantic?

The Essay

The principle of analysis is rather difficult to apply to essays, because there are so many different varieties: philosophical, critical, aesthetical, and historical. In general, essays may be grouped in two classes: formal and informal. The purpose of the formal essay is to instruct, to inform; the purpose of the informal is to amuse or to influence attitudes and opinions. In style, the formal essay is critical and sometimes logical; whereas, the informal essay is easy and rambling, sometimes conversational. However, there are some common features. Every essay that is worthy of study has a purpose and a theme. The discovery of the purpose and the theme of an essay contributes to understanding and appreciation. Having discovered the purpose and the theme, the pupil should go on to observe the points made by the author and the conclusions reached.

If the essay is formal and fairly logical, a sentence

outline is a good analytic device. The outline should indicate the main and the minor points and the relationship of one point to another. A simpler type of analysis is more suitable for the informal essay. Have the pupil attempt to set down the purpose or theme of the essay, and the important points made without attempting to arrange these points in a logical outline.

Questions may be used effectively to encourage the pupil to analyze an essay. Of course, these questions should be carefully formulated. They should be few in number and definite in form. Each question should center the pupil's attention on some important feature of the essay. For example:

1. What is the purpose of the essay?
2. What is the theme or subject?
3. What points does the author make?
4. What conclusions are reached?
5. Do you agree with the author?

However, analytic devices should not be overworked. Outlines and questions may well be employed at first to encourage analytic habits. After the pupil has acquired some facility in reading essays, it should not be necessary to make written outlines. The function of the outline and of the questions is to cultivate an analytic mental attitude.

Poetry

There are three basic types of poetry; narrative, dramatic, and lyric. Although all types of poetry have certain elements in common, each type has its own dis-

tinctive features with which earnest students should be familiar.

Narrative poetry may be subdivided into three types: epics, ballads, and metrical romances.

The *epic* is a long narrative poem relating the deeds of a mighty hero; and, incidentally, revealing the religious rites, occupations, and customs of a tribe or nation. The hero and his companions struggle with antagonistic forces; as fate, monsters, or men. *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, and *Beowulf* are noted examples of the epic. Chamberlain and Richards say:

"There are several characteristics of epic poetry. It is narrative. It is also objective; that is, it presents its characters and actions as they are while the author keeps his own sentiments and sympathies to himself. * * * Though the chief interest centers in heroic deeds, there is also a place for pictures of national life, religious rites, occupations and social customs."²¹

Ballads are short, narrative poems composed to be sung and often have a refrain. They make their appeal to the primitive traits of love, hate, fear, shame, and grief. They reflect the lives and thoughts of the common folk. Ballads are usually concerned with episodes rather than with complete plots.

"Scholars have pointed out that a ballad story progresses by 'leaping and lingering.' 'The transition from one part of the story to another is abrupt; each part is dwelt on or lingered over rather than worked out and developed. A spotlight is turned here, then there—the

²¹ Chamberlain, R. W., and Richards, E. B., *Beacon Lights of Literature*, Book One, p. 235; Iriquois Publishing Company, New York, 1931.

rest is darkness, but often eloquent darkness.' This quality is best illustrated in this collection, by the story of 'Hind Horn.' " ²²

Ramey and Johnston say: "The ballad may be defined as a poem in which the audience's familiarity with the subject-matter is counted upon for understanding of a story presented by means of conventional symbols and significant details." ²³

Ramey and Johnson say further that the ballads were a choice collection of stories of love and war, of death and treachery, of unfaithful friends and cruel enemies, and of poison plots and unnatural murders.

In verse form the preference of ballad writers is for the quatrain or four line stanza. Repetition is employed frequently. The content of the ballad makes its appeal primarily to the common people. In the early days scops and gleemen chanted the simple tales of real life for the entertainment of the common folk. More pretentious poets presented more dignified tales for the entertainment of kings and nobles, now known as metrical romances.

Some well known examples of the ballad are: *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Hind Horn*, *Lord Randal*, and *Bonny Barbara Allen*.

The foregoing discussion applies particularly to the traditional ballads or old English ballads. A more modern form, the so-called "literary ballads" present certain contrasts. They copy some of the devices of the older

²² Blair, Walter, and Chandler, W. K., *Approaches to Poetry* p. 14; D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1935

²³ Ramey, A. R., and Johnston, Winifred, *New Hesperides*, p. 211; Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, 1932.

forms, but they were not written to be sung and have not been perpetuated orally. Some of these literary ballads are based on folk lore, as Rossetti's *Sister Helen*; others recount actual events, as Longfellow's *Wreck of the Hesperus*. Other examples of popular literary ballads are: *Lochnivar*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, and *The Highwayman*.

Metrical Romances were written to entertain kings and nobles rather than the common people. They may be said to be aristocratic and pretentious versions of the old ballad themes. The term romance referred originally to any narrative poem written in a romance language; but later its meaning was restricted to long poems employing a special technique. New and more elaborate verse forms are employed. Literary artists and minstrels spared no effort in their attempt to make the metrical romance an attractive work of art; consequently, the metrical romance represents the height of poetic achievement in the Middle Ages.

On the content side, metrical romances deal with familiar themes. The four recurring most frequently are:

First, *folk lore and legends*, as the legend of the fairy mistress in "*Sir Launfaul*." The Cinderella motive appears in a variety of forms.

Second, *history or pseudo history* provides the basic material for many of these tales. The heroes of Greece and Rome are celebrated. King Arthur and his knights are the heroes of many stirring romances.

Third, *the universal passion of love* is inevitably woven into metrical romance. Love appears in several funda-

mental forms: conventional love, courtly love, and love of the mortal and supernatural. Of these three, courtly love is most popular. Usually, the love motive is interwoven with other themes.

Fourth, *adventure* is a popular theme. Adventure in the form of a quest is the most popular type as found in the Arthurian romances.

The popularity of the metrical romance declined in the period of the Revival of Learning and the Reformation; but their influence continued in what some have called pseudo-metrical romances. In many instances the themes were repeated in more modern forms as in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and Spencer's *Faerie Queene*. The verse patterns were refined and made more beautiful.

Drama differs from other types of poetry in that it is written to be acted on a stage. The author reveals his characters and tells his story through the speech and action of the characters of the play. The interest centers in the conflict of contending forces. The movement of a drama may be divided into five parts:

1. *The introduction.* The introduction presents the circumstances existing at the beginning of the play and gives necessary information to the audience.

2. *Rising Action.* Something occurs to disrupt the normal course of events. The conflict of contending forces gets underway and continues with increasing complications until a turning point is reached. The struggle of the contending forces approaches a climax.

3. *The Climax.* The fortunes of the chief character takes a definite turn for better or worse; for better in the comedy and for worse in the tragedy. The complications begin to unravel. One set of forces begins to prevail over the opposition.

4. *Falling Action*. The problem which developed in the rising action reaches a solution. The complications are unravelled.

5. *The Conclusion or Denouement*. The struggle of the contending forces comes to an end—a catastrophe or a happy solution.

There are three distinctive types of drama: tragedy, comedy, and melodrama.

Tragedy is the losing struggle of a strong but imperfect character against the overwhelming forces of life or nature. A well-balanced conflict is a basic element in every great tragedy, and it is this conflict that holds the interest of the spectator or reader.

A comedy presents an incongruous situation which may be either physical or mental. Low comedy is characterized by physical incongruities; high comedy, by mental incongruities.

The melodrama is a mixed form in which there is always some comedy, and often near tragedy. In melodrama the hero always comes out victorious no matter how great the odds may be against him. Many scenes are highly emotional, causing the audience to roar with laughter or to moan with anguish.

Each of the main types of drama may be subdivided into two or more classes. For example, there is the fate tragedy, the romantic tragedy, and the social tragedy. Also, there are several varieties of comedy; as the farce, the burlesque, the satire, and the fantasy. Melodrama may be subdivided into the heroic and the romantic.

Several plays should be read and classified to become familiar with the different types. However, classification should not be overemphasized, for many plays do not fit

neatly into any rigid classification. Typical plays should be selected for analysis and classification.

Tragedies may be analyzed by noting:

First, the aims and ambitions of the main character or characters.

Second, the forces that aid the main characters in attaining their ambitions, commonly called the "protagonistic forces"; and the forces that operate to prevent the main characters from attaining their ambitions, commonly called the "antagonistic forces". It is the struggle between these forces that makes the tragedy.

This is the type of analysis that contributes to appreciation. Similarly, other tragedies may be analyzed.

The same type of analysis may be made of comedies, except the antagonistic forces should be placed first in the outline. In comedy the antagonistic forces are set up for the purpose of being knocked down by the protagonistic forces. In melodrama the protagonist is always successful, however strong the antagonistic forces may be.

When the aim is to develop appreciation, analyze several typical plays rather than spend three or four weeks on one play. Make a comparison of the different types of plays to bring out clearly the points of likeness and difference. The pupil cannot read a play with appreciation until he has a fair idea of what to look for when he reads. He should know the essential features of each type of drama; then he can begin to read with insight and discrimination. Begin with the easier plays and progress by short steps to the more difficult. Avoid wasting time on relevantly unimportant questions; as, Was Hamlet Crazy? The brief answer to this question is,

no; he was an introvert. (Hamlet would have made a superior college professor.) Center attention on more fundamental questions. Read many plays with the attention centered on the more general features of the play.

Lyric poetry originally meant song poetry. The word lyric comes from the Greek word, *lyra*, the name for an ancient harp-like musical instrument. Thus the name lyric suggests one of the fundamental features of this type of poetry; namely, its song-like quality. But the meaning of the word *lyric*, has been broadened to designate poems with rhythm and harmony of sound suggesting music. Many modern lyrics "sing themselves in the heart not on the tongue."

A distinctive feature of lyric poetry is its expression of the poet's thoughts, passions, moods, and feeling tones. A lyric poem is a window through which the reader may peer into the poet's heart to divine his feeling tones and moods. The heart of *The Raven* is not the story that it tells, but the feeling tone which pervades the poem, revealing to the reader the heart of a bereaved lover. Similarly, Halleck's *On the Death of Joseph Drake* is the expression of grief upon the loss of a true friend. Likewise, nature poems express the feelings of poets as they contemplate the beauties and wonders of nature. Thus lyric poetry expresses joy, love, anger, grief, trust, faith, reverence—all the varieties of human moods and feelings.

Blair and Chandler emphasize the feeling element in lyric poetry:

"In the lyric, then, the poet comes into the limelight but in narrative poems he hides behind the scenes. The poet's thoughts, passions, and moods are all-important elements. Like Whitman, the lyricist celebrates himself;

imaginatively he tells of his emotion. And the reader is stirred and delighted, because, having known in his own life a similar emotion, he finds an outlet and an uplift in a poem which repeats the essential part of his experience and expresses his actual self as well as if he himself had written it."²⁶

Briefly, lyric poetry has two outstanding qualities: (1) Expression of the author's reflections, feelings, tones, and moods; and (2) rhythm and harmony suggesting music.

In addition to the pure lyrics there are special types which should receive some attention; as songs, sonnets, odes, and elegies. Emphasis should be placed upon the content and form of these special types.

Both narrative and lyric poetry may be analyzed for the purpose of appreciation by asking a series of good questions. These questions should be few in number but broad in scope. Trivial questions lead naturally to superficial reactions. Numerous questions, narrow in scope, tend to divert the pupil's attention to the minor details of the selection under consideration. The pupil cannot see the town for the houses. The writer once observed a good illustration of misdirected attention and wasted effort due to too many questions of the wrong type. The teacher was attempting to direct a ninth grade class in the study of *Rhoecus* by James Russell Lowell. The teacher had one pupil tell the story; conducted a brief written exercise; and asked the following questions—all in 50 minutes.

²⁶ Blair, Walter, and Chandler, W. K., *Approaches to Poetry*, p. 250; D Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1935.

1. Who is the main character in this poem?
2. What does the first act tell as to the kind of young man he was?
3. What did Rhoecus see as he walked through the woods?
4. Describe the figure he saw when he turned to answer the voice.
5. Was the wish he made a natural one?
6. Explain the feeling of Rhoecus when the Dryad granted his wish.
7. What did the young man do that afternoon?
8. Tell briefly of the visit of the bee.
9. Why was Rhoecus disappointed when he returned to the tree?
10. Should he have been given another chance?

Apparently, neither the teacher nor the pupils appreciated the poem. Several of the questions were copied verbatim from the text. The discussion of each question was necessarily brief and quite inconsequential. A few broad questions stimulating a thought analysis of the poem would have contributed far more to the purpose of the study-appreciation. Would not the following list of questions accomplish this purpose far more effectively?

1. What purpose does the prelude or introduction serve?
2. What is the central theme of the poem? Or, what is the main idea?
3. Why did Rhoecus fail to make good?
4. What elements of technique has the author used to give effective expression to his ideas?
5. What significance does this poem have for us?

When appreciation is the end sought the primary purpose of the questions is to stimulate the pupils to make a thought analysis of the poem as a basis for interpretation and evaluation.

Similarly, the pupil may be led to make a thought analysis of any poem. For example, a few well designed questions on *Abou Ben Adhem* will provoke the desired reactions—

1. What is the central thought of this poem?
2. Why was Ben Adhem's name placed at the head of the second list?
3. What elements of technique does the author employ to give effective expression to the central idea?
4. Is the thought of this poem valid? Should we emulate Ben Adhem?

Some attention may well be given to *prosody*, but an intensive study of these formal elements is too technical for high school students. Moreover, prosody is relatively unimportant for appreciation. Overemphasis on form diverts attention from content and thereby reduces great poetry largely to rhythm and rhyme. Form is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Form should be taught as elements of technique which the author employs to give effective expression to his ideas and feelings. The formal elements of poetry may be considered under three main headings: Rhythm, Rhyme, and famous verse forms.

Under *rhythm* familiarize the pupil with the most common verse forms: the iambic, the anapestic, the trochaic, and the dactylic. Some of the rarer forms may be taught after the pupils have become sufficiently familiar with these more common forms. Teach by example rather

than by explanation. Select some simple rhythms and have the pupils mark the accented and unaccented syllables, thus identifying the verse forms. Train the pupils to recognize the different rhythms when poetry is read to them. Since most English poetry is written in Iambic, this form should be emphasized more than any other. Have the pupils make a list of poems written in each of the common rhythms.

Avoid overemphasizing scanning. Remember that the aim of studying rhythm is not to learn to scan poetry, but to develop an appreciation of rhythm as an element of poetry. The aim is to plot poetry on paper, but to make rhythm more satisfying to the ear.

Rhyme is usually appreciated by the pupil without much emphasis in the classroom. However, the pupil's attention may well be directed to a few cardinal points; as end rhymes, internal rhymes, and the different rhyming schemes. Illustrate with several concrete examples.

Of the various *verse forms* the most frequently recurring are: blank verse, the ballad stanza, the four-beat couplet, the five-beat couplet, and the sonnet. The Spenserian stanza occurs less frequently.

Many of our greatest poems are written in blank verse. Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, and Tennyson, as well as many modern poets, employ this form of versification. *Paradise Lost*, *Enoch Arden*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, and *Evangeline* are well known poems written in blank verse.

The four-beat couplet is found in such well known poems as *L'Allegro*, *Tam O'Shanter*, *Prisoner of Chillon*, *Marmion*, and *Christabel*. The five-beat couplet originated with Chaucer and has come down to the present through Spencer, Shakespeare, Pope, Goldsmith, Massfield, and Frost. Some familiar poems written in this

verse form are Chaucer's *Prologue*, *Essay on Man*, *Deserted Village*, and *My Last Duchess*.

The ballad stanza takes its name from its use in the early ballads of England and Scotland, but it is used with equal effectiveness in lyric poetry. This verse form is second in frequency only to blank verse. The true ballad stanza is a quatrain of alternating tetrameters and trimeters; i. e., a four foot line alternating with a three foot line. The ballad stanza is found in *Sir Patrick Spens*, *King John and the Abbot of Canterbury*, and many other popular ballads. In the lyric field the ballad stanza is a popular form. Some examples are: *Auld Lang Sine*, *We Are Seven*, *Rose Aylmer*, *In School Days*, and *The Height of the Ridiculous*.

The Spenserian Stanza is named for Edmund Spenser, its inventor. It consists of nine lines with a complicated rhyming scheme. Of this verse form, Reed Smith says: "Each stanza paints a little picture in the first eight lines, frames it in the ninth line, and hangs it up for all to see."²⁷ Some well known poems employing the Spenserian stanza are: *The Faire Queene*, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and the *Eve of St. Agnes*.

The sonnet consists of fourteen lines and is in itself a complete poem. The English form consists of three groups of four lines each and a concluding couplet. The sonnet was popular in the Elizabethan period, and again in the Romantic period. It is used by many contemporary writers. Historically, there are two forms of the sonnet: The Italian and the English form. These forms differ in their rhyming schemes and in the grouping of the lines.

²⁷ Smith, Reed, *The Teaching of Literature*, p. 201; American Book Company, New York, 1935.

The Italian form has an octave made up of two quatrains and a sestet consisting of two three-line divisions. There is a turn or pause between the octave and the sestet. The octave presents the situation; the sestet gives the outcome or application. There is no couplet ending as in the English form; the last two lines never rhyme. Perhaps, the best known sonnet in the Italian form is Keat's *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*.

The English form of the sonnet has three quatrains and a concluding couplet. The first line of each quatrain rhymes with the third, and the second line, with the fourth. The quatrains present the theme leading to a conclusion; the couplet expresses the climax or termination. Some examples of this form are: *It May Be So With Us*; Longfellow's *Chaucer*, Spenser's *Sonnets from The Amoretti*, Not Marble, Gilded Monuments, and other sonnets from Shakespeare.

The foregoing discussion of the formal elements of poetry applies particularly to the older and more standardized type of poetry. The new poetry is more irregular in form. The new poets have turned away from many of the poetic standards of the past and have sought new fashions and more direct forms of expression. Since there are characteristic differences between new poetry and the old, a systematic comparison of the new and the old should make a distinct contribution to the ability to appreciate good poetry, whether new or old. The new poetry differs from the older forms in both content and form. Cross, Smith, and Stauffer presents a good summary of the distinguishing features of the new poetry with respect to both form and content.²⁸

²⁸ Cross, T P, Smith, Reed, and Stauffer, E C, *Good Reading for High Schools*, p 487-488, Ginn and Company, Boston, 1931,

Form

- "Free verse, or absence of regular line beat and absence of regular line length.
- Variety and looseness of form.
- Absence of rime and of regular stanzas.
- Use of conversational, everyday language.
- Brevity and condensation.
- Avoidance of rubber stamp expressions (poetic clichés) (kle sha).
- Disregard of old forms and standards.
- Use of slang.
- Curious, even freakish topography—arrangement of lines, use of capitals and punctuation marks, etc."

Content

- "Wide range of subjects, including commonplace, even disagreeable subjects.
- Subjects chosen from everyday life here in America, instead of from the past and from foreign countries.
- Realistic spirit.
- Keen insight that strips the surface glitter (illusion) from all things, especially war.
- 'Direct, even fierce attacks on all forms of authority—social, literary, religious, etc.
- Strong irony ('showing the other side of the picture').
- Satiric note ('searching out the faults of people and institutions to hold them up to ridicule').
- Love treated naturally and not sentimentally.

Frank, fearless, unashamed attitude toward all things.

Direct, vigorous, energetic attitude toward life.

'Young,' noisy, insistent in tone.

Objective quality, looking out rather than in; describing the object for its own sake instead of telling how the poet feels about it."

In making this comparison of the old and the new poetry, use lucid explanation combined with informing illustrations. Have the pupils select examples of the new and the old to make clear how they differ on characteristic points. Further, compare the examples of both type to the standards of truly great poetry. What makes a poem truly great? In brief, any great poem has a valuable content expressed artistically. Chamberlain and Richards say, "What makes a poem truly great? It is not the music of the verse alone; or the vivid pictures painted by the poet; or, if the poem be narrative, the absorbing tale related, or the moral significance underlying the composition. It is the combining of all these into a perfect whole."²⁹ In brief, a truly great poem presents a valuable content in attractive form. Form without content is void of greatness, but beautiful expression adds grandeur to great thoughts.

Summary of Section on Analysis of Poetry. A thought analysis of poetry contributes to appreciation. Teach the pupil to recognize the basic types of poetry; Narrative, dramatic, and lyric. Develop the outstanding features of each type, and the characteristics of the various sub-

²⁹ Chamberlain, R. W., and Richards, E. B., *Beacon Lights of Literature*, Book One, p. 674; Iriquois Publishing Company, Syracuse, N. Y., 1931.

divisions; as ballads, epics, metrical romances, sonnets, odes, and elegies.

Teach the pupils to analyze narrative and lyric poetry by asking a few thought-provoking questions about each poem.

In analyzing a drama, first note the type of play: comedy, tragedy, or melodrama. Center the attention on the conflict of forces. Follow this conflict through the rising action, the climax, and falling action, to the outcome or conclusion.

Familiarize the pupil with the most common verse forms: the iambic, the anapestic, the trochaic, and the dactylic. Train the ear to appreciate melody in a poem.

Compare the old and the new poetry for the purpose of developing the characteristic differences in both form and content.

Application

By application is meant the translation of the theme or content of a selection into one's own experience. The reader cannot fully appreciate any great poem unless he can translate the central theme in terms of his own experience. A vague notion that *Abou Ben Adhem* was blessed because he loved his fellow man may contribute little, or nothing, to the spiritual life of the reader. To appreciate the social and spiritual value of this principle the pupil must see clearly its significance for his own life and the lives of his fellow pupils. Most high school pupils will fail to appreciate Emerson's *Each and All*; because they are not given to deep philosophical reflection. Indeed, many are not capable of this type of mental activity. Consequently, they fail to grasp the full significance of the central theme: "Nothing is fair or good alone."

Arnold Bennett expresses the idea of application clearly and forcefully. He asserts:

"Study is not an end but a means. I should blush to write down such a platitude did I not know by experience that the majority of readers constantly ignore it. The man who pores over a manual of carpentry and does naught else is a fool. But every book is a manual of carpentry and every man who pores over any book whatever and does naught else with it is deserving of an abusive epithet. What is the object of reading unless something definite comes of it? You would be better advised to play billiards. Where is the sense of reading history unless you obtain from it a clearer insight into actual policies and render yourself less liable to be duped by the rhetoric of party propaganda? Where is the sense of reading philosophy unless your own attitude toward the phenomena of the universe becomes more philosophical? Where is the sense of reading morals unless your own are improved? Where is the sense of reading biography unless it is going to affect what people say about you after your funeral? Where is the sense of reading poetry or fiction unless you see more beauty, more passion, more scope for your sympathy than you saw before?

"If you boldly answer, 'I read only for pleasure,' then I retort that the man who drinks whiskey might with force say, 'I only drink whiskey for pleasure.' And I respectfully request you not to plume yourself on your reading nor expect to acquire merit thereby.

"But should you answer, 'I do try to translate literature into life,' then I will ask you to take down any book at random from your shelves and conduct in your own mind an honest inquiry as to what has been the effect of

that particular book on your actual living. If you can put your hand on any subsequent period, or fractional moment of your life and say, 'I acted more wisely then, I wasn't such a dupe then, I saw more beauty then, I was kinder then, I was more joyous then, I was happier then—than I should have been if I had not read that book'—if you can honestly say this, then your reading of that book has not been utterly futile. But if you cannot say this, then the chances are that the reading of that book has been utterly futile. The chances are you have been studying a manual of carpentry while continuing to sit on a three-legged stool and to dine off an orange box."⁸⁰

Briefly, application or the translation of literature into life is an essential element in the appreciation of any selection. Literature is an interpretation of life.

SUMMARY

The function of literature is to enrich human experience. Literature is an interpretation of life. Literature appeals primarily to sense experience and thought and through these to the feelings and emotions. The mind acts as a unit. The whole child reacts to literature.

Appreciation depends upon three fundamental factors: apperception, analysis, and application.

Apperception is the process of interpreting new experiences in terms of the old. In order that he may appreciate a selection the pupil must have an adequate background in experience, for appreciation must wait upon comprehension. Comprehension cannot outrun experience. Apperception may be aided by the use of maps,

⁸⁰ Bennett, Arnold, *Translating Literature into Life*, The Bookman, 50:98-100, 1919

diagrams, and pictures. Travel is one of the best means of enriching experience. Also, apperception is an important principle of selection.

A thought analysis is an important factor in appreciation. The aim of analysis is to make clear the outstanding features of a particular selection, and reveal the characteristics of the type to which the selection belongs; as the short story, the essay, or a particular type of poetry. In making this analysis avoid centering attention on the relatively unimportant. Emphasize the outstanding features. Ask a few questions broad in scope rather than many trivial questions.

Literature is significant to the reader to the extent that it is translated into his own experience. The primary function of literature is to help the individual to make better adjustments to life situations, to enrich his intellectual and spiritual life. A secondary function is to provide an escape from the irritations of life. The school should emphasize the primary function of literature and minimize the secondary function.

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CHAPTER VII

ENGLISH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

In recent years progressive educators have lost faith in the age old aims of education: the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of routine habits. These educators are developing new conceptions of education expressed in new articles of faith. The prophets of the new education are urging:

1. Freedom for the child rather than restraint;
2. Child initiative rather than teacher initiative;
3. Child activity rather than child passivity;
4. A child-centered school rather than a subject-centered school;
5. Creative self-expression rather than blind conformity to an existing order;
6. The development of a wholesome personality, and not merely the acquisition of formal knowledge and the building of fixed habits.

Obviously, the mental hygiene movement is closely associated with these fundamental conceptions of progressive education. In fact the aims of mental hygiene and the aims of progressive education are identical. The fundamental objective of both mental hygiene and progressive education is the development of a well-integrated, wholesome personality. The mental hygienist is more interested in the type of adjustments the child is making to

his social environment than he is how much the child knows. To the mental hygienist knowledge is important to the extent that it functions in the life of the child as an adjustive factor. Likewise, habits are desirable if they aid the child in making effective adjustments. Ideas, habits, and attitudes are not ends in themselves; they are means to a valuable outcome; namely, the development of a normal human personality.

THE NORMAL PERSONALITY

Since the development of a normal personality is being set up as the aim of all education, we may well inquire, *What constitutes normality in the human personality?* It is imperative that educators have a clear conception of *normality*—the goal of all educative activity. Moreover, this conception should be objective, not subjective. We are all prone to apply a subjective standard in evaluating the personalities of others. If you are like me, you are normal; if you are different from me, you are abnormal—at least, you are a little queer. In this connection one is reminded of the honest old Quaker who is reported to have said to his wife; “Everybody except me and thee is queer, and sometimes I think thee is a bit queer.” But the need is for an objective standard of evaluation which the individual can apply to himself as well as to the other person.

In a statistical sense, the individual is normal if he deviates only a few points from the average or norm of the group to which he belongs. For example, a man is normal in height, if he measures five feet and nine inches. He is abnormal if he measures eight feet and six inches, or four feet and two inches. Also, it is normal for temper

to flare up when an activity under way is unduly hampered or restricted. On the other hand, it is abnormal to have temper tantrums at the least provocation. It is abnormal, also, to display no temper at all when confronted with extremely provoking situations. Similarly, it is abnormal to deviate widely from the norm in intellectual traits. From this viewpoint, both the genius and the idiot are quite abnormal. On the contrary, all those who fall close to the norm, when large numbers are measured with respect to any trait, are normal in the statistical sense. But this conception does not help us much, except in the recognition of individual differences. There is a more informing conception of normality to which we now turn.

When is an individual normal? The vital test is the individual's ability to establish successful relations with his associates, the ability to make good social adjustments. Morgan says, "The real test of a normal person is whether or not he can make good social adjustments."¹ Living is a process of adjusting to life situations. Problematical situations arise continually in the experience of every individual. To have one's desires and purposes thwarted is the common experience of all mankind. Thwartings cannot be avoided, because they have their source in environmental obstacles, personal defects, and conflicting motives. How the individual reacts to his mental conflicts determines whether he will be normal or abnormal. The normal person faces reality and works out the best possible solution to his difficulties; the abnormal person tries to evade conflicts, to escape from reality through day-dreaming or phantasy, or sets up some other kind of defense mechanism. The abnormal person substitutes the

¹ Morgan, John J. B., *The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child*, p. 7, The Macmillan Co., New York

satisfactions of the imaginary world for achievement in the world of reality, or seeks undesirable compensations for failures in the world of reality. This he does by resorting to daydreaming and other escape and defense mechanisms.

The meaning of escape mechanisms may be made more definite by thinking of the universe as two worlds: the world of reality and the world of phantasy. The normal person lives most of the time in the world of reality; the abnormal person tries to escape from the world of reality by substituting the world of phantasy and the extent to which he substitutes the world of phantasy for the world of reality determines the extent of his abnormality. If he has gone far enough to lose all contact with the world of reality, he is classed as insane—a case of schizophrenia. If he has gone only a little way into the world of phantasy, but is not quite able to make satisfactory adjustments to his fellows; he is classed as queer, cranky, or eccentric. The psychologist refers to this latter type as mildly psychopathic. Some wander far away from the world of reality, but not quite far enough to be called insane; they are the extremely psychopathic. These extreme cases may suffer from hallucinations and delusions.

The normal person, then, lives in the world of reality and is able to make good social adjustments; the abnormal person lives to a considerable extent in the world of phantasy, failing to work out good adjustments to the world of reality. The abnormal group may be subdivided into the psychopathic and the insane. However, classifying human personalities is a hazardous undertaking, subject to gross errors. In fact, any such classification is largely arbitrary. There is some basis in fact for the statement that we are all more or less insane. Few, if

any, of us are entirely normal. Not many are wholly crazy. A vast majority of all the people fall somewhere between the two extremes. Many of us are only mildly psychopathic others are more psychopathic. A few have wandered so far from the world of reality that they are nearing the boundary line between psychopathy and insanity. However, only the extreme cases can be classified with even a fair degree of reliability. Classification into a few groups usually distorts the facts. In reality there is only one group within which individuals are distributed according to the normal distribution curve.

THE ABNORMAL PERSONALITY

If the school is to set up as its goal the development of wholesome personalities, the teacher must have a clear conception of normality and be sensitive to the manifestations of abnormality in her pupils. Since the progressive teacher is a construction engineer in the field of human personality, it is essential that she be able to visualize the normal child and to detect early any abnormal tendencies. Some of the most common abnormal types of reaction are described in the following paragraphs—

1. *Introversion.* Daydreaming is a mild form of introversion. The introvert tends to withdraw from the world of reality and to seek substitute satisfactions in the world of phantasy. Hamlet is a classical example of this type of personality. He was a great scholar, fresh from a famous university, a profound thinker, but an inveterate dreamer. Hamlet had ideas; but he was ineffective in putting his idea into practice. He could think

and plan, but he always failed to act at the opportune time. Hamlet said of himself that he was "pigeon-livered and lacked gall." Again, he reflected, "And thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Hamlet is typical of all those who think and dream but fail miserably in meeting the difficult situations of real life. His life is an eloquent discourse on the tragedy of inaction, the tragedy of substituting dreams for realities. Of course, he is only a fictional character; but the portrayal of his introversion is true to life. There are many Hamlets in the world today. Some outdo Hamlet in his famous reverie, beginning "To be or not to be"; and go on to end their own lives rather than face the grim realities of life. Others continue to live as failures and ne'er-do-wells. They substitute dreams for accomplishment. Thus they seek to escape from the world of reality. In extreme cases, the introverted personality loses all contact with the world of reality and enters the shadowy land of insanity from which so few ever return. Some of the early symptoms of introversion are habitual inattention in class, an unwillingness to participate in play activities, avoiding social functions, and excessive reading of the escape type of literature. This excessive reading is characteristic of superior children.

2. *Identification.* Identification is a special form of introversion, meriting special consideration. Identification is a kind of psychological magic employed in an effort to secure happiness in life without really earning the right to be happy. Failing to make satisfactory adjustments to the real world, the individual withdraws from the world of reality and seeks satisfaction in the world of phantasy. Through the mechanism of daydreaming the

individual becomes a conquering hero, a daring adventurer, or a gallant lover. Or, he may become a suffering hero, getting his satisfaction from picturing to himself how his friends will weep when they finally realize how unjustly he has suffered. Dream phantasies take a variety of forms: physical feats, physical attractiveness, mental feats, vocational success, wealth, homage, and display. In general, the satisfactions denied the individual in the world of reality are enjoyed imaginatively in the world of phantasy.

The escape type of reading is another form of identification. Ready made daydreams in the form of fairy tales and romantic fiction are devoured with avidity. Reading of this type enables the individual to escape from the world of reality into the fairy land of the imagination in which all desires may be satisfied, all longings fulfilled. For example, a young man may have difficulty in adjusting his love affairs in the real world; he withdraws from the world of reality and seeks satisfaction for the love impulse in reading romantic love stories and identifying himself with the heroes of the stories. In his imagination he marries the lovely lady or the glamour girl and lives happily ever thereafter. Since reading is commonly considered a noble form of human activity, this type of maladjustment may pass unnoticed—may even be commended. Often the reader is praised for his intellectual interests when he is reading to escape from the world of reality—taking a mental narcotic. (Verily, dreams are such stuff as bachelors and spinsters are made of.) The danger of excessive reading of the escape type is emphasized by Aldous Huxley, the English literary critic, under the caption, *The Perils of Reading*. Huxley says:

"As of all good things, one can have too much even of reading. Indulged in to excess reading becomes a vice—a vice all the more dangerous for not being generally recognized as such. Yet excessive reading is the only form of self-indulgence which fails to get the blame it deserves. The fact is surprising; for it is obvious to anyone who candidly observes himself and other people that excessive reading can devour a man's time, dissipate his energies, vitiate his thinking and distract his attention from reality."²

Again, Huxley remarks, "Not only do we read too much; we also read the wrong kind of stuff."

Obviously, excessive reading of the escape type of literature is a danger signal indicating that the child is having difficulty in making his social adjustments. He is seeking substitute satisfactions by identifying himself with the hero of the story.

The motion picture theater provides another avenue of escape from the world of reality. In many instances, the motion picture is a dramatization of the escape type of story. The child identifies himself with his favorite star of the screen forgetting for the time being his dissatisfaction with the life of reality. Moderate interest in motion pictures is quite normal; but excessive devotion to the theater indicates the presence of an escape mechanism—identification. Berg Observes:

"The universal appeal of the movies arises from the fact that the poor and downtrodden find their virtue rewarded in the last reel; The working girl does not succumb to the temptations of the seducer; instead, by her beauty and simplicity and love she wins the heart of

² Huxley, Aldous, *The Perils of Reading*, Back cover page of Readers Digest, March 1939.

the handsome, rich young man and lives happily ever after. Virtue is always triumphant in the movies; rags become royal raiment when worn for virtue's sake!"³

Since virtue is always rewarded, the hero always comes off victorious, and love wins; the theatre provides a superior means of escape from a disappointing world of reality.

Hero worship is another form of identification. Under normal conditions hero worship may inspire the pupil to nobler living; but there is danger that this devotion will exceed normal limits. In the more extreme cases the mind tends to lose contact with reality and to derive its satisfactions from the world of phantasy in which all desires are satisfied. Hero worship may be substituted for achievement in the world of reality. Some go so far as to identify themselves completely with their heroes. An insane man clings to the delusion, "I am George Washington."

3. *Rationalization.* Rationalization is a process of concealing our real motives and giving more socially acceptable explanations of our conduct. This process has been described as mental camouflage. The individual so disguises his unworthy motives that they appear acceptable to others and may seem good even to himself. Thus people make themselves appear to be better than they really are. The student may neglect his books and fail in his studies. He explains his failure by saying that the instructor had it in for him; or, he may say that he had trouble with his eyes. He will not admit to himself or to others the real cause of his failure. The fabled fox—

³ Berg, Louis, *The Human Personality*, p 106; Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1933.

a very abnormal fox—could not jump high enough to pull down an enticing bunch of grapes; so he sat down and rationalized saying that the grapes were sour and after all were not fit for one of his standing to eat. A young man may be jilted by a girl whom he greatly admires. Immediately, he discovers that the girl has a thousand faults; and remarks that he is glad he found her out in time to avoid annoying complications. Similarly, a young lady may be crazy about a certain young man; but he passes her by for another. Then the neglected lady says she could have had this young man, if she had wanted him, but she did not want him. In fact, he is not good enough for her. A politician may seek office for personal gain and honor; but he makes his campaign on a platform of public service. The defeated candidate finds that after due deliberation and consideration he did not really want the office for which he made a vigorous campaign. Nearly always, it is the other fellow that was to blame for the collision. Adam ate the forbidden fruit—so he said—not because he liked it, but because Eve gave it to him. The foregoing illustrations are all cases of rationalization.

Is all rationalization abnormal and deserving of condemnation? No; a little rationalization may serve to oil the wheels of social usage and lessen the sting of defeat and disappointment. If one has fought a good fight and lost, he may be excused for offering alibis. However, this procedure is merely a process of applying a salve to the wound and should be recognized as such. The normal person faces his failures thoughtfully and tries to discover the causes so that he can apply remedial measures. On the other hand, the abnormal person meets his failures by trying to explain them away, by offering

excuses. Of course, this attitude contributes nothing to success in the future. Furthermore, in extreme cases the tendency to rationalize failures is carried too far ending in systematic delusions as found in certain forms of insanity.

4. *Compensation.* Compensation is characterized by exaggeration. The usual motive for compensatory activity is a feeling of inferiority. The individual attempts to divert attention from a trait in which he feels inferior by a display of unusual strength or interest in another direction. A boy that is physically inferior may try to compensate by excelling in his studies, or by trying to be funny. A man failing to win the recognition he craves in his profession may develop a hobby and by this means make a bid for more attention. A girl disappointed in love affairs may become an enthusiastic social worker. A boy failing in his studies on account of dullness may make a bid for attention and recognition by engaging in anti-social forms of behavior: as truancy, lying, or stealing. Then he becomes a problem child, and probably a juvenile delinquent. In some cases a marked disability may have a compensating value. One writer cites the case of a boy who inflated his ego by referring to himself as "the guy that nobody could teach to read." Fanaticism is usually a form of compensation. The writer once knew a Sunday school superintendent who, every Sunday morning, insisted on making a speech against the use of tobacco. His reforming zeal was a compensation for his own shortcomings, real or fancied, in earlier life. He, too, had been an inveterate user of tobacco. When he became a Christian, he said, he was cleansed of all his filthy habits, including the use of tobacco. According to

his view, anyone who used tobacco had not been thoroughly cleansed. He felt that it was his bounden duty to exhort all Christians to be cleansed as he had been cleansed. Thus he became a fanatic in the crusade against tobacco. His attitude was a part of his religion. Likewise, a reformed drunkard makes the most enthusiastic temperance lecturer. His zeal as a reformer is a compensation for his earlier sins.

Berg cites a case in which a hobby was carried to an extreme as a compensation for physical inferiority.

"Pat Reilly is a well known magazine writer. About five feet in height, he wears high heels and makes the most of his inches. Now at an early age, Pat became interested in Napoleon; and from the age of fourteen he has collected Napoleonic relics until, at the age of forty, he owned one of the finest collections in existence. He did this at a great sacrifice, for his income is limited, and Napoleonics are expensive. But Pat has often starved himself to obtain some cherished object even vaguely associated with the 'Little Corporal.'

"When he speaks of his hero, his eyes glow with ecstasy, and he becomes vibrant. He will recount anecdotes reflecting glory upon his god, all the while licking his lips as he enjoys his vicarious feast. His friends are amused by his unconscious imitation of Napoleon's poses and the use of mannerisms characteristic of the dead emperor.

"Pat has a *Napoleonic complex*. Through compensation for a physical inferiority, he has completely identified himself with the 'Little Corporal.' " *

Another method of compensation is through the magic

* Berg, Louis, *The Human Personality*, p. 107, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1933

wand of phantasy. The bachelor dreams of lovely women, happy homes, and childish voices. The maiden lady dreams of her prince charming. Fairy tales open up to the child a wonderful world in which fairy godmothers reveal the secrets of success. Cinderella becomes a lovely princess, marries the king's son and lives happily ever afterwards. "Dumhead," under the guidance of an old man whom he meets on the way, performs a great feat through which he wins the favor of the king, and is rewarded by receiving half the kingdom and the hand of the beautiful princess in marriage. Also, a boy comes off victorious in his adventures with a giant. These are all magnificent fancies and in some measure compensate the reader for the limitations of his real environment.

However, not all compensations are to be condemned. Thwartings are unavoidable. In some cases compensations are necessary and desirable. But it is important that these compensations be chosen wisely from the point of view of the individual's needs; also, they should be socially acceptable. Otherwise, they may lead to delinquency, fanaticism, or extreme introversion.

5. *Regression.* Regression is a return to earlier and more childish ways of adjusting to difficulties. Idealizing the past is a mild form of this type of adjustment. Older people like to talk about the good old days when the summers were hotter and the winters were colder. Similarly, the claim is made that the old-fashioned schools were better than the modern ones. Some who are young in years think that the traditional school of the present day is better than the progressive school. A woman's tears used as defensive weapons are another example of regressive behavior. Likewise, a temper tantrum on the

part of a man is a return to, or a continuance of, a childish way or reacting. Many adults are still in rompers from the standpoint of their emotional reactions. They are cases of arrested development or of regression.

But difficulties cannot be vanquished by the puny blows of childish anger or washed away by a flood of tears. The difficulties remain and should be attacked with more intelligence. Moreover, the extreme forms of regression constitute serious maladjustments. Many cases of homosexuality are instances of regression. Naturally, homosexuality prevents satisfactory adjustments to the love life of the individual. Again, cases are on record of adults regressing to the infantile level, requiring the same care as a little child. These extreme cases have failed miserably in their efforts to make normal adjustments. In its milder forms, regression causes the individual to have the backward look, to be traditional in his attitudes towards politics, education, and religion.

6. *Hysteria*. Hysteria, neurasthenia, and anxiety neuroses are common forms of maladjustment. The hysteric patient converts his mental conflicts into physical ailments. The ailments serve to reduce the tension caused by the mental conflicts. A child dislikes school; he develops a schooltime headache. A man has a bookkeeping job which he dislikes; he develops writer's cramps. The cramps provide a good excuse for not working. A housewife may be dissatisfied with her station in life; she develops physical ailments which serve the double purpose of excusing her from performing her duties and of securing her additional sympathy and attention. Because of these satisfactions there is grave danger that the patient will become a life long invalid. In a very real sense

neurasthenics enjoy their poor health. They enjoy their ailments because the ailments serve as tension reducers.

SUMMARY

The normal individual lives for the most part in the world of reality. The practical test of normality is the ability to make good social adjustments. The normal person makes an aggressive attack on his problems and works out the best possible solution. He resorts to defense mechanisms only for the purpose of securing rest or recreation, or to lesson the sting of unavoidable defeat.

The abnormal person assumes a defensive attitude when mental conflicts arise. He offers excuses for his failures; or he tries to run away from his conflicts by escaping into the world of phantasy. These defense mechanisms take many different forms; such as introversion, identification, rationalization, compensation, regression, and hysteria.

The teacher should have a clear conception of normality, and be able to detect readily any symptoms of maladjustment manifested by her pupils.

ENGLISH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Now what does the discussion of the normal and the abnormal have to do with the teaching of English? What is the relation of the teaching of English to the mental health of the pupil? There are many points of contact some of which are fundamentally important.

Individual Differences

All teachers must react in some way to the individual differences among their pupils. These differences are as important in English as they are in other subjects. For example, the reading ability of a group of high school pupils may vary from the fifth grade level to the freshman college level. Similar differences are found in language, grammar, and composition. Also, there are marked differences in interests and needs in any unselected high school group. An attempt to teach the same subject matter in the same way to all pupils is certain to contribute to the maladjustment of both the bright and the dull pupils.

Failure to make the necessary adjustments for individual differences leaves the bright pupil without much to do, without any adequate challenge to his ability. Having but little work to do, the bright pupil becomes an idler, a daydreamer, an introvert. Having read the material outside of class, or rapidly in class, the bright child finds but little to interest him in a class reading and discussion gaged to the level of the average pupil; therefore he is likely to escape from the monotonous existence of the classroom in to the enchanted land of phantasy. In one instance, the teacher complained that a bright pupil was inattentive in class. The pupil justified his attitude by declaring there was nothing worthwhile to attend to in the class discussion. Perhaps, the pupil was right; if so, the teacher was not only failing to give the pupil anything worthwhile to do; but also she was forcing him to resort to daydreaming, to secure the satisfaction that he should have been able to secure from his studies. Daydreaming in class is only a mild form of maladjustment;

but it is a symptom of a dangerous tendency; namely, the tendency to *substitute the satisfactions of the imaginary world for achievement in the real world*. In so far as the teacher encourages daydreaming, let us hope that her influence will not be very far reaching. Usually, the bright pupil displays considerable ability to adjust himself to his difficulties without much help from the school. In spite of his neglect in most schools, the bright pupil usually makes a success of his life. However, a few do fail to make adequate adjustments, becoming queer, eccentric, fanatic, or delinquent. Only a very few become so maladjusted that they enter the land of insanity. Perhaps, all could be saved for the normal life, if the school would perform its function effectively. Of course, a broken life always has multiple causation. The school is only one—a very important one—of several factors operating to produce the extreme cases of maladjustment. However, the school should be a directive factor, exercising some measure of control over the other factors. At the very least, the school should be a wholesome factor in the life of the pupil, giving him specific aid in working out his problems of adjustment.

But it is the dull pupil that is the victim of the most sinister influences growing out of the failure of the school to make adequate adjustments to individual differences. To require more work of a pupil than he is able to perform contributes heavily to an inferiority complex, and, in general, to nervous disorders. Dr. Norman R. F. Maier of the University of Michigan states that nervous breakdowns are caused by being forced to react to situations to which no satisfactory mode of response can be

found.⁵ A sense of sin or feeling of guilt may contribute heavily to neurotic behavior because the individual feels that he should do something but does not know what to do. On the other hand, facing the electric chair produces tensions but not neuroses, because the individual knows what he must do. Dr. Maier says, further, that rats forced to react to a situation in a way that resulted in failure and punishment soon developed neurotic symptoms. The animals ran around in circles on the floor, exhibited tics, and fell into various degrees of coma.

From rats to pupils may be a far cry; but if failure and punishment make rats neurotic, these factors may produce similar results in school children. Certainly, to be normal every child must have a reasonable measure of success in his work, and must win for himself some measure of recognition from his fellows. Every child has a dear ego which he must keep inflated with the elation of success. Failure in his school work deflates the child's ego. A deflated ego is very depressing; so the child must do something to reinflate his ego. Being unable to react successfully to his school work, he resorts to some type of defense mechanism; as daydreaming or compensation. Thus the child begins to be abnormal or maladjusted. At first, he is only mildly psychopathic; but there is grave danger of more and more deviation from the normal, unless the school makes possible a better adjustment to its demands. Failure and non-promotion year after year produce more and more maladjustment.

In some cases, the child attempts to compensate for his feeling of inferiority by resorting to anti-social forms of behavior. A pupil resorting to this type of behavior may

⁵ Maier, Norman R. F., *Nervous Breakdown Cause*; Science News Letter, December 31, 1938.

become a bully, a thief, or a consummate liar. Many juvenile court cases are examples of asocial forms of compensation. The psychiatrist maintains that the delinquent child is simply a maladjusted child. If the English teacher—or any teacher—attempts to exact from the child more than he can do, she becomes a contributor to some form of maladjustment, for the child is forced to adopt a defense mechanism. It may be delinquency, introversion, or some other form. Surely, delinquent or neurotic behavior is a price too great to pay for any amount of formal knowledge most of which the pupil will do nothing with except to forget it. Solecisms and barbarisms in the use of language are far less serious than the possession of abnormal personality traits. Moreover, there is no need to distort the pupil's personality in order to teach English or any other subject. Functional English can be taught even to the dull pupil without distorting his personality. All that is necessary is to teach English in proportion to the child's needs and his ability to learn. The requirements of the school must be adjusted neatly to the pupil's level of ability. Also, the development of a normal personality should be the primary consideration and a knowledge of the subject secondary. A knowledge of any subject is important to the extent that it contributes to the aim of all education—the development of a normal personality. The subject matter should never be emphasized to the extent of making excessive demands upon the pupil, and thereby warping and distorting his personality. Mental health is far more important than mental content.

Literature and Mental Hygiene

Literature should contribute to the development of a normal personality by extending and enriching the pupil's experience. But literature may, and often does, have just the opposite effect; that is, it may contribute to the development of undesirable personality traits; as introversion. Reading may be harmful as well as helpful. Why, then, should one read at all? To this question Kerfoot gives a thought-provoking answer. He maintains:

"There are at bottom two reasons, and only two reasons in the world, why any of us ever read anything."⁶

What are these reasons?

"Consciously or unconsciously, wittingly or unwittingly, we all read everything we do read (not according to its nature, but according to our need)—either—

- (1) To get away from ourselves or;
- (2) To find ourselves."

A similar view is presented by Groves and Blanchard. In summarizing their discussion of the relation of literature to mental hygiene, they say:

"To sum up this diversified field, we see in literature, according to its kind, a three-fold benefit. It provides for mental relaxation through a flight from reality which is usually fairly healthful; it is a great outlet for emotions that are otherwise inhibited and relieves the tensions due to inhibition; it helps to understand life and to find assistance through this interpretation in working out our adjustments. While all of these are important, it is the

⁶ Kerfoot, J. B., *How To Read*, Chapter IV; Houghton-Mifflin Co., New York, 1916.

type of literature which aids in the understanding of human behavior which is of especial interest to mental hygiene."⁷

To this point of view many other writers subscribe. (See the list of references at the end of the chapter.) The primary function of literature, according to Kerfoot and many others, is to interpret life for the reader, to give him aid in making adjustments to the world of reality. The secondary function is to provide a way of escape—when escape is needed—from the world of reality into the world of phantasy in which the reader's suppressed desires may be realized. Verily, the purpose of the reader is to find himself or to lose himself.

The school should stress teaching the pupils to read to find themselves. Not much emphasis is needed on the escape function, since most people are prone to read for escape rather than for adjustment. In fact, misled by the pseudo aim of reading for pleasure, many teachers have greatly overemphasized the escape type of reading. The writer often asks his students why they read; the usual answer is; "I read for pleasure." Apparently reading for pleasure is reading to lose oneself. This type of reading is legitimate when the pupil really needs rest and recreation. Sleep is a biological escape from reality, but some pupils having a hard lot in life may need more relief from a grim reality than sleep can afford. Such pupils may well turn to the escape type of literature for additional relief. Then they may properly read romantic love stories, fairy tales, mystery stories, detective stories, any story dealing with the imaginary world rather than the

⁷ Groves, E. R., and Blanchard, Phillis, *Introduction to Mental Hygiene*, p. 364-365, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1930.

real world. The best selection is one that provides an outlet for the reader's unfulfilled wishes and desires.

Briefly, the pupils do not need to be taught to read to escape from reality. The danger is that too much of their reading will be of this type. Pupils need to be taught to read primarily for adjustment values; also, they need to be taught when to do the escape type of reading and how to select wisely the material to be read for this purpose.

But the school needs to place more emphasis on the primary function of literature, its adjustment value. The school teaches the pupil to appreciate good literature and develop the habit of reading to enrich experience. In so far as the school teaches the pupil to substitute the secondary function of literature for the primary function, it is teaching *depreciation* of literature, not appreciation. To appreciate is to evaluate properly. Certainly, a selection of literature having high adjustment value is not evaluated for its real worth, if the reader regards it as having merely an escape value. For example, a father reading *Sorrel and Son* as a means of escape from his problems of maintaining proper relations with his son is substituting the secondary function of this novel for the primary function. His reaction is a depreciation of the novel, not an appreciation. The man who reads the Bible to find how to gain heaven and miss hell falls far short of appreciation. The school errs, therefore, when it sets up pleasure or enjoyment as the main aim of reading. If the English teacher cannot rise above the old hedonistic philosophy of life, she should know her psychology well enough to understand that reading for adjustment is more enjoyable than reading to escape from reality. There is more real joy in finding oneself than

in losing oneself. Both types of reading should be enjoyable, but reading for adjustment provides the greater pleasure. Moreover, pleasure is not the aim of reading; pleasure is a byproduct of the reading process. Some selections generate a melancholy feeling tone which may be unpleasant rather than pleasant. However, the more value a pupil derives from his reading the deeper and stronger will be the feeling tones. Consequently, reading for adjustment gives the reader the greater pleasure.

Again, the methods employed often defeat the true aims of teaching literature. Bert Roller reports a case of this type.⁸ The teacher in this instance reported that her superintendent required her to spend three months on *Macbeth*. When asked what she did, she replied, "everything." She had the pupils memorize long selections, write outlines and character sketches, make lists of unknown words, look up the meaning of unusual words, and *finally* act the play. The teacher added, "I killed *Macbeth* for them; I don't believe they will ever look inside Shakespeare again, unless some other English teacher makes them." Also, the teacher confessed that on the final examination the pupils did not know the play. Doubtless, the pupils were so busy with the details of the play that they missed all the larger features; and so never found out what it was all about. How could a pupil derive much adjustment value from this meticulous type of study? For a more effective approach to the study of *Macbeth* see the section on the appreciation of poetry in the preceding chapter.

What should the pupil read? The traditional English teacher insists that the pupil should read mostly the

⁸ Roller, Bert, *Reading for Displeasure*; English Journal, 17:737-741, 1928.

great classics. Reading material is selected on the basis of literary merit. Any selection placed in the hands of the pupil must be approved and given high rank by literary critics. This point of view, however, overlooks the fact that the average high school pupil—not to mention the pupil below average—is not particularly literary minded. So the child laden with all his problems of adjustment is sacrificed on the altar of literary canons. As some one has well said, "The school starts where the pupil is not and tries to lead him where he does not want to go." On the contrary, the correct psychological procedure would be to start where the pupil now is with respect to his reading needs and interests and lead him by easy steps where it would be profitable for him to go. What can the pupil read with profit, is the primary question? He may well read any book that will help him to make better adjustments to life situations. The success and happiness of the pupil depends upon the quality of his adjustments. Reading should be a never failing source of inspiration and guidance in meeting life's problems.

The reading course should be outlined on the basis of the problems of adjustment that are normally common to all pupils. For example, if the pupil is having difficulty in making satisfactory social adjustments, he should read Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, and other good books of this type. When the pupil is facing the problem of selecting a vocation, he should read several good books dealing with this problem. When his love affairs become all absorbing problems, he should read good realistic love stories and psychological novels to get help in making his adjustments to this phase of life. Similarly, all the fundamental problems of adolescence should be listed and good reading material

suggested dealing with each problem. This procedure would place the pupil in the center and build a reading program around his needs. The school would start with the pupil where he now is and lead him to higher levels of reading.

Perhaps, some high school teachers will object to selecting reading material on the basis of the pupil's problems of adjustment on the ground that much of the reading material would not be good literature. Some teachers appear to be unable to adopt the child-centered point of view. However, the pupil should receive first consideration. He should read the material that will help him most in building a normal personality. Moreover, the books that have adjustment value have not all been written by second rate authors. Some of the books have been best sellers; some rank medium and some rank high in literary merit. By selecting the best books in each field the teacher can teach selections that have adjustment value and at the same time cultivate a taste for good literature.

The Teacher of Literature

The first step in securing a good teacher is the *selection* of a prospective teacher with a good measure of teaching aptitude and of the natural capacity to appreciate good literature. Also, native capacity for understanding the child is essential. All that the school can do is to *develop capacity*. If there is lack of initial capacity, training cannot accomplish much. It is futile to think that the teachers college can take a student with small capacity and produce a good English teacher by exposing him to 24 hours—or even 40 hours—of college English. Forty hours will accomplish but little more than 20 hours, since

poor initial capacity plus the maximum amount of training equals a poor teacher. A rich natural endowment plus the minimum amount of training will equal a good teacher; provided the personality development has been normal. Of course, good endowment plus good training produces the best results. However, if applicants for the teaching profession were carefully selected, the problems of training would be greatly simplified and the profession considerably elevated.

The dominant part that native capacity plays in achievement in any field is most apparent in exceptional cases as in geniuses. How much training in English did the incomparable Shakespeare have? Probably, none; for, as a rule, English was not taught in the secondary schools of Shakespeare's time. Any way, who could have taught Shakespeare English? William James is another outstanding example of the importance of natural gifts in achievement. James was trained in other fields, but not in psychology—a field in which he achieved an enviable distinction both as a teacher and writer. Seldom, if ever, can outstanding achievement in any field be explained as a result of superior training.

The first consideration, then, in providing good English teachers for our boys and girls is the selection of young men and women with intelligence and aptitude in the field of English.

Given a student of average intelligence, or better, and a special aptitude in the field of English, how much and what kind of training is desirable?

First of all, the training of an English teacher should be broad and general rather than narrow and technical or highly specialized. It is generally agreed that this general training should be equal in amount to a standard

college course, at least. A year, or more, of graduate work is desirable but not essential. The college hours remaining after a reasonable minimum in English has been provided should be distributed among several important fields of learning; as science, social studies, languages, and the fine arts. The outcome of this broad training should be the development of many-sided interests rather than the specialist's attitude.

The field of social studies is particularly important for the teacher of literature. Since literature is fundamentally an interpretation of life, a knowledge of life is essential for the teacher of literature. Life is what it is to a considerable extent because of its social and economic background. Geographic factors influence the course of history. Economic factors are fundamental in the perennial conflict of national groups. History provides a background for understanding the present. Therefore to appreciate and interpret literature the teacher must have a fair knowledge of the social and economic factors of human life. Moreover, aristocrat and commoner are differentiated not so much by human nature as by social and economic factors. Great writers interpret for us the lives of the high and the low, the rich and the poor; but we can appreciate their efforts only to the extent we have an adequate background of knowledge and experience.

A certain minimum of technical training in the field of English should be required of all students preparing to teach English. Perhaps, no one knows just what this minimum should be—unless it be those who make the curricula for teachers colleges. Several colleges have set a minimum of 24 semester hours. This minimum appears to be adequate for students with superior intelligence and a special aptitude for English. Moreover, if

the student is deficient in these qualities, additional hours in the subject will add very little, if any, to his ability to teach English. Additional training is largely offset by the law of diminishing returns. Consequently, more extensive requirements are not recommended. Furthermore, it may be well to observe that the teachers college does not undertake to train the student to teach—only to make a good beginning as a teacher. Year by year the teacher should deepen and extend her knowledge of the subject as she teaches. Many teachers learn more English in teaching one year than they learned in accumulating six or eight hours of credit in college. After all, the most important training in subject matter that the teachers college could give the prospective teacher would be training in how work in the field. If the teacher has this working ability and a passion for teaching, she will soon be recognized as one of the capable teachers of her day and generation.

Also, some training in psychology and in the principles of method and management is highly desirable, if not absolutely essential. Teaching is stimulating and guiding the learning activities of the pupils. Stimulation requires some knowledge of motives; guidance, some knowledge of the laws of learning. Then, too, if literature is to be taught primarily for its adjustment value, the teacher must have some knowledge of the pupil and his problems of adjustment. She should recognize readily any symptoms of maladjustment and be able to prescribe a literary corrective. In addition, the teacher should have a sound philosophy of education. She should be able to see the child as a developing personality and to conceive of her subject as a means to an end, as contributing to the development of a wholesome personality. The teacher's

philosophy of education is far more important than her special methods and techniques. Great teachers in all ages are known much more for their philosophy of education than they are for their methods or even for their knowledge of subject matter.

Finally, a very essential factor in the preparation of a teacher of literature is an extensive course in the school of life, the only school with a real activity curriculum. This school holds no graduation exercises, confers no degrees; but the outcome should be the development of a normal personality. To have read many books is not all the preparation that an English teacher needs; she should have, also, a rich and varied experience with life. A teacher whose love impulse finds an outlet only in day-dreaming or in reading love stories cannot be an ideal interpreter of the love impulse to flaming youth. The teacher who has no children of her own cannot understand fully the sentiment of parental affection as it is expressed by literary artists. Marital love and the grief that is felt by a bereaved husband or wife cannot be appreciated by old bachelors and spinsters. It is only those that have lost loved ones in the Autumn time that can appreciate Byrant's poem beginning:

"The melancholy days have come,
The saddest of the Year,"

It is only those who commune often with nature that really appreciate the beauties of nature and the wonders of the natural world as expressed in song and story.

In brief, the teacher's own experiences provide the background for her interpretations of literature. So the teacher of literature should be a normal human being with a rich and varied human experience.

SUMMARY

Progressive educators have set up as the fundamental aim of education the development of a well-integrated, wholesome personality.

The normal individual lives in the world of reality, and makes an aggressive attack on his problems of adjustment as they arise, working out the best possible solutions. The ability to make good social adjustments is the test of normality. If the individual faces reality and is able to work out good social adjustments, he is normal.

The abnormal person falters in the face of reality. He fails to make good adjustments, and in the presence of his failures he assumes a defensive attitude. Some of the common defensive mechanisms are: introversion, identification, rationalization, compensation, regression, and hysteria. The school contributes to maladjustment by its failure to make adequate provision for individual differences. Also, by teaching pupils to read for pleasure—to lose themselves—rather than to read to get aid in making adjustments—to find themselves.

The school should emphasize the primary function of literature—its adjustment value.

The teacher of English literature should have a broad general education, not a narrow technical training. She should have a fair knowledge of the subject and a better knowledge of the child. The English teacher should be well trained in the school of life, and should continue to live a rich and varied life encompassing all the fundamental human experiences.

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